SHAMAN OF THE RADICAL RIGHT

The Life and Mind of JONATHAN BOWDEN

EDWARD DUTTON

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THE LIFE AND MIND

OF JONATHAN BOWDEN

EDWARD DUTTON

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Edward Dutton
12th February 2025
Oulu, Finland

“Jonathan, I Hardly Knew Ye”

Ed Dutton’s biography of Jonathan Bowden is a revelation. I thought I knew Jonathan Bowden. I even thought we were becoming friends. But the truth was, I hardly knew him at all. Yes, I knew his ideas. But I didn’t know the man or his mind.

After Jonathan’s untimely death just a couple weeks short of his 50th birthday, his friends began to compare notes. Soon it became clear that Jonathan was a liar. He lied about his occupation and income. He lied about his education. He lied about his family. He lied about where he lived.

Nobody blames Jonathan for lying about where he lived. That was simply a matter of security. Every dissident should cocoon his private life in disinformation.

But most of Jonathan’s lies were simply matters of vanity. His lies always magnified him. They never minimized him. He claimed to be wealthy, not poor. He claimed to have degrees that he didn’t earn, not that he was an omnivorous autodidact. He claimed to have a wife and four or five children, not that he was a bachelor.

I first met Jonathan on two occasions in October of 2009 when I was living in Atlanta, first when he came to give a speech, then when he returned from a visit to Florida before flying back to England. Jonathan was an early and enthusiastic supporter of my webzine and publishing house, Counter-Currents. In all, he wrote 35 articles and reviews for us between 2010 and 2012.

In January of 2011, Jonathan emailed me saying that his life was in danger. He was being stalked by Antifa types. I was living in San Francisco at the time and had an extra room. I told him to pack his grip and fly to California. I was willing to put him up for a while. I thought it would be interesting. I also thought Jonathan might be more productive if he had a regular internet connection, a microphone, and access to my library. But I received no reply.

In February, Adrian Davies informed me that Jonathan had had a mental

breakdown. The police had picked him up, semi-clothed, in the streets of Reading, carrying a samurai sword. (When I first met him, he was carrying a box marked "Samurai Sword, Made in Taiwan." Inside it were two of his paintings that he sold to me.) I felt I had dodged a bullet.

By March, however, Jonathan seemed back to normal. He began writing for Counter-Currents again. In February of 2012, he came to California for nearly a week to speak at a Counter-Currents retreat. His speech was excellent, and he was in good spirits throughout. One of my fondest memories is of Jonathan walking through the streets of Santa Cruz, deep in a discussion of astrology with one of Charlie Manson's old girlfriends. I thought to myself, "What an interesting life I lead." I also remember his childlike wonder as we wandered around City Lights Books, with its connections to the Beat movement and Leftist politics. I took to calling him "the inspector," for when he wanted to read something, he would draw out a magnifying glass from his trench coat pocket. By the end of the visit, I felt we were becoming friends; that I was finally getting to know him. We made plans for him to return to California that fall. I looked forward to taking him to Robinson Jeffers' Tor House near Carmel. But it was not to be. Less than a month later, Jonathan was dead.

Ed Dutton has done a great service to Jonathan's friends and readers. He has recorded memories before death claims them. He has saved documents from the teeth of time. He has untangled the truth about Jonathan's life from his web of fantasies and deceptions. He has sorted out the facts about Jonathan's family, his education, and the many groups he was involved in: the Monday Club, Western Goals, the Spinning Top Club, the New Right Forum, the London Forum, etc. He has also thrown considerable light on Jonathan's mind, including its eccentricities and illnesses. It all comes into focus. Thank you, Ed.

What's the lesson? Jonathan Bowden didn't tell the truth about his life. But that's not a rare failing. Jonathan Bowden did, however, have the courage to tell the truth about the most important issues of our time, and he did so with eloquence and impact. For that, he will always remain a hero and a guide.

Dr. Greg Johnson
Curator of the Jonathan Bowden Archive

5th December 2024

SHAMAN
OF THE
RADICAL RIGHT

CHAPTER ONE

We're *Not* Sorry!

> If people with our sorts of values ruled Modernity, everything about the society would be, at one level the same, and in every other respect completely different . . . How so? Firstly, cultures would be mono-ethnic. Secondly, there would be a respect for the past glories of our civilization. Thirdly, we would not preface every attempt to be strong by saying 'I'm sorry, I'm sorry for what we have done.' We're *not* sorry!
>
> Jonathan Bowden, *Credo: A Nietzschean Testament*, 8th September 2007.

The Naughty Little Secret

I was first asked to write Jonathan Bowden's biography in September 2019, but I was concerned that there simply wouldn't be enough interest. My mind was changed very suddenly one autumn evening in 2024 as I sat, appropriately, at a meeting in a room above a central London pub; pub meeting rooms being where most of Bowden's orations occurred. It was a meeting related to what we might call a "purple-pilled" magazine: not quite fully "red-pilled;" not prepared to publicly discuss certain key issues, though the people involved all knew about them, were "red-pilled" on them, and would happily explore them privately, especially after a few drinks.[1]

I got talking to a particular female journalist and philosopher; a woman who enjoys a certain degree of fame in these youthful, "anti-Woke" circles.[2] When I introduced myself, she replied in a slightly humorous and intrigue-tinged tone, "Yes, I know who *you* are . . ." Friendly and engaging, after a while, and without saying anything, she reached into her handbag and produced the book *Extremists: Studies in Metapolitics*;[3] a series of speeches by Jonathan Bowden on such cult figures as the Hindu-convert thinker Savitri Devi (1905–1982), the traditionalist Italian philosopher Julius Evola (1898–1974) and the extreme conservative Scottish philosopher Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881). There was Bowden, looking thoughtfully into the distance, emblazoned on the cover; a revolver in each hand. She accompanied her slightly shocking presentation with a facial expression that combined mischievousness with undisguised pride, as if to say, "Look, Ed! Look how based I am, really! I bet you didn't think I had it in me!"

It was at that point that I realised that there was greater interest in this scintillating "far right" orator than I had previously thought. Clearly, for quite a few of the semi-respectable "far right"—the kind who appear on GB News and who wrote for this magazine—the speeches of Jonathan Bowden were their illicit little pleasure; their naughty secret; the shot of whisky enjoyed clandestinely by the overtly teetotal and godly church lady. How could this be so? How could Bowden have achieved cult status? As others have pointed out, he was a short, portly middle-aged man addressing small gatherings above London pubs, recorded in a fairly amateur way. He was also a fantasist and a dreamer, but, perhaps, these superficial problems were actually part of his appeal. It all made him seem unpretentious; in marked contrast to the slick, disingenuous, commercial world from which it is so difficult to escape.[4]

Bowden took conservative thinkers and expertly distilled their essential ideas, like the consummate lecturer. He did this with spell-binding oratorical charisma; his confidence, reassuring his listeners that "Clown World" would, of course, collapse in the end. For these reasons he was an "influencer" on many prominent young conservatives. This was Bowden's essential achievement, but his impact was also more subtle. His brilliance as a teacher meant that his audience experienced, through him, a profound understanding of Western and of "far right" thought and, so, a sense of power and control amid what they saw as the Woke chaos of women being men, all television programs being manipulative propaganda, "girl Communism" (wherein dissenters are "cancelled;" excluded from the game for being "offensive"), and the incompetent being over-promoted due to their race. Bowden made them feel part of something greater; of the inevitable re-triumph of the English and European peoples in the face of their self-induced destruction, and part of a religion of power in which you must not give-up; in which you must fight eternally to be one of the gods, as did the pagans.[5]

Bowden allowed them to absorb themselves in a kind of performance art centred around him, in which the apparently dystopian present did not matter and they could feel bonds with England, with place, with ancestors; all the time hypnotised by this baba in a bowtie. Bowden was a shaman in the sense that he imparted to them semi-secret knowledge—a whole new

way of understanding historical thinkers such that his initiates were connected to "based thought" and the discovery of obscure based thinkers and their spine-tingling originality—such that *they* were part of a clandestine intellectual elite; an elite that would win a war to tear down the insanity of modern England: Multiculturalism, feminism, trans-sexuality, Wokeness, Woke Christianity,[6] even the sham that was British democracy; all that offended the ancestors would be ripped apart. It would be torn down and any postcolonial guilt or obsession with past "racism"—weakness, in other words—would be "stepped over."

Britain's Based Intellectual Tradition

Bowden elucidated the long intellectual tradition of radical conservatism not only in Continental Europe but in the UK, exhuming long-forgotten writers, such as obscure members of The Angry Young Men or the philosopher and British Union of Fascists activist Alexander Raven Thomsen (1899–1955). Thomsen's philosophy, set out in his book *Civilization as Divine Superman,*[7] appears to have been that Britain is an organism, it must struggle and sacrifice in order to progress (so "equality" must be rejected), History moves in cycles led by Great Men.[8] Underpinning this idea is the unscientific view that a basic substance ("monistic energy-time") proceeds hierarchically through a series of "integrations": chemical to biological and so on. When a "higher integration" is reached, it is not reducible to the lower integration. This is completely opposed to the scientific idea that, for example, biological theories must make sense in terms of the underlying chemistry.[9] The biological integration leads to a new integration—Civilization, or the Superman—and this is, in turn, a component of God. So we are struggling towards becoming God.[10] Hence, there appears to be a Hegelian influence of History unfolding, implicitly divinely.

Bowden also delved into better-known writers, such as the author of the widely read novel *Tarka the Otter*,[11] Henry Williamson (1895–1977), a supporter of British Union of Fascists leader Sir Oswald Mosley (1896–1980),[12] to stress his point that there was an English far right intellectual tradition. As British historian Paul Jackson has put it, Bowden "was able to draw together the intellectual aspects of extreme right cultures . . . putting together radical oppositional and counter cultural perspectives . . ." in an

easily digestible and exciting fashion. This could "have a powerful impact on those looking for an alternate sense of meaning, people of course who the extreme right always tries to attract."[13]

The Cult of Jonathan Bowden

Bowden inspired his listeners; enraptured them. An online cult, composed mainly of people who were still children when he died, has developed around him. As of December 2024, on YouTube alone, there exist the channels "The Jonathan Bowden Archive" of his recorded and filmed speeches and "Jonathan Bowden" which includes its subject's stirring reading of Beowulf. There are numerous sites with clips or out-takes from his orations. In some cases, such as "Enoch Powell[14] and Jonathan Bowden: I Have No Regrets," these have been set to awe-inspiring electronic music, or, as with "English Nationalism," there is patriotic Classical music playing as a background to Bowden's voice. "Bowden Vanguardism" is one of many videos which have not only set parts of Bowden's speeches to music but place relevant stock footage on the screen. In a sense, such videos make Bowden a central component to a form of outsider video art. "Jonathan Bowden – We Want Our Country Back" combines his oration, poignant Classical music and colour video of English rural life from the 1950s; walks in sixteenth century villages, country fairs and evocative seaside holidays.

Various influencers have produced videos in which they discuss Bowden's thoughts and abilities, such as "Jonathan Bowden, The Outsider" by "Scrumpmonkey" on the popular channel "Academic Agent." Dr Neema Parvini (b. 1982), the "cancelled"[15] former Senior Lecturer in English Literature at the University of Surrey who works under the moniker "Academic Agent," tweeted on 23rd November 2023 that: "The person who most transformed my thinking on how to parse the Islam issue, and also how to spot Counter-Jihad in the service of liberalism, was the late Jonathan Bowden." Indeed, on Twitter, "Jonathan Bowden Quotes," which regularly tweets out exactly what its name implies, has almost 9000 followers at the time of writing. They include a well-known conservative comedian and two prominent young conservative journalists. Bowden quotes and clips of his speeches are tweeted by accounts with many thousands of followers, such as "Mark W. @DurhamWasp," "miss white @cinecitta2030," and "Raw Egg Nationalist @Babygravy9." Such is some people's adoration of

Bowden that one woman's Twitter account is entitled "Jonathan Bowden's Love Child @JoBoIsMyDad." This account, as well as her other account "Ylass14 @Yorkshirelas141," concentrates almost exclusively on Bowden memes and videos.

For these youthful Bowdenites, rather than be like the hypocritical liberal virtue-signallers—whom many studies prove, on average and in comparison to conservatives, are objectively unpleasant,[16] selfish,[17] arrogant and entitled,[18] treacherous,[19] criminal,[20] mentally unstable,[21] congenitally physically unhealthy,[22] physically weak,[23] short,[24] ugly,[25] have objectively unattractive bodies,[26] mutated,[27] hateful,[28] authoritarian,[29] and dishonest people,[30] and who, being frightened and mentally unstable, covertly attain status by pretending to care about equality but in fact are motivated by a desire for power and by resentment of that which represents the power they feel they lack[31]—they would simply proclaim:

> We're proud to be English, we're proud of all we've achieved—which is almost the entirety of the modern world! We have won an evolutionary battle with other groups via the weapon of our geniuses! We've dominated them because we're better than them! And we're not going to say "Sorry"! Why should we be "Sorry" for being strong, "Sorry" for being the best, "Sorry" for being the winners?! No! In Bowden's words: 'We're *not* sorry!'

The Way Forward

In this book, we will explore the thinking, psychology and life of Jonathan Bowden and attempt to understand how it has produced this growing personality cult. We will begin by examining what is commonly termed the "far right" and Bowden's place in it, both philosophically and historically. We will then turn to the psychology of the charismatic, of which we will aver Bowden was an example, and the factors that tend to lead to charisma. Thereafter, we will set out his biography, before returning to Bowden's psychology and the extent to which it parallels that of the charismatic.

On the way, we will explore the history of the British postwar far right and we will meet the intriguing cast of characters who were among Bowden's friends and acquaintances, many of whom have suffered considerable financial and status loss and even persecution, whether by the UK government or by Communist mobs, to fight for the kind of Britain they believe in or, to paraphrase Conservative government minister Alan Clark (1927–1999), to keep alive the "tribal essence."[32] These will include a professional artist, a classically trained actor, a model and actress, a

privately-educated security guard, and assorted graduates of prestigious universities. But discussions of Bowden's place in the far right and his charisma all help to answer the essential question of the next two chapters: Why has Bowden become so popular?

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1 Alcohol seems to make you more right-wing, at least in contemporary Western societies, by impairing inhibitions and rendering you more instinctive. See, B. Ford, B. Way and I. Eisenberg, "The effects of alcohol consumption on political attitudes: A dual-process approach," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 82 (2019): 62–74.

2 By "Woke" I mean the form of Cultural Marxism which pursues "equality" for supposedly culturally marginalized groups. Since around 2010, this word has gradually replaced "Social Justice Warriors" and Cultural Marxism. For a more detailed exploration of Wokeness see, E. Dutton and J. O. A. Rayner-Hilles, *Woke Eugenics: How Social Justice is a Mask for Social Darwinism* (Perth: Imperium Press, 2024).

3 J. Bowden, *Extremists: Studies in Metapolitics* (San Francisco, CA: Counter-Currents, 2017).

4 V. Hessler, "The Enduring Appeal of Jonathan Bowden," *Transcendental Times* (21st June 2023), https://transcendental-titans.net/history/the-enduring-appeal-of-jonathan-bowden/

5 A. de Benoist, *On Being a Pagan* (Atlanta, GA: Ultra, 2004).

6 See, for example, a book by the Archbishop of Canterbury: J. Welby, *Reimagining Britain: Foundations for Hope* (London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2018). Justin Welby (b. 1956) was forced to resign as Archbishop in November 2024 for failing to ensure that allegations of child abuse within his Church were seriously investigated.

7 A. Raven Thomsen, *Civilization as Divine Superman: A Super-Organic Philosophy of History* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1932).

8 See also, M. McMurray, "Alexander Raven Thomsen, Philosopher of the British Union of Fascists," *The European Legacy,* 12 (2012): 33–59.

9 See, E. O. Wilson, *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* (New York: Knopf, 1998).

10 R. Phillips, "From Periodic Decline to Permanent Rebirth: Alexander Raven Thomsen on Civilization, Pathology, and Violence," *Philosophical Journal of Conflict and Violence,* 2 (2022).

11 H. Williamson, *Tarka the Otter: His Joyful Water-Life and Death in the Country of the Two Rivers* (London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1928).

12 Mosley himself set out his own philosophy in O. Mosley, "The Philosophy of Fascism," *Fascist Quarterly* (January 1935). Mosley seems to assume an Hegelian process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis leading to the ultimate synthesis of Caesarism or Fascism through which Fate, which has presided over the entire process, decrees that our continuous historical struggle will culminate in eternal glory. The metaphysical assumptions here are obvious. Mosley is espousing a kind of implicit religiosity (see below) or a philosophy where a kind of quasi-religious worldview is assumed.

13 P. Jackson, *Pride in Prejudice: Understanding Britain's Extreme Right* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022), 90.

14 Enoch Powell (1912–1998) was a Conservative Cabinet Minister, famously sacked from the Shadow Cabinet in 1968 for his "Rivers of Blood" speech on the subject of non-white immigration.

15 B. Afer, "Seers Catalogue," *The Brazen Head* (25th September 2023), https://brazen-head.org/2023/09/25/seers-catalogue/

16 B. Verhulst, P. Hatemi and N. Martin, "Corrigendum to 'The nature of the relationship between personality traits and political attitudes' [Personal. Individ. Differ. 49 (2010): 306–316]," *Personality*

and Individual Differences, 99 (2016): 378–379.
17 Y. Yang and P. Liu, "Are conservatives more charitable than liberals in the U.S.? A meta-analysis of political ideology and charitable giving," *Social Science Research,* 99 (2021): 102598.
18 J. Moss and P. O'Connor, "The Dark Triad traits predict authoritarian political correctness and alt-right attitudes," *Heliyon*, 6 (2020): e04453.
19 A. Waytz, R. Iyer, L. Young, J. Haidt and J. Graham, "Ideological differences in the expanse of the moral circle," *Nature Communications*, 10 (2019): 1–12.
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21 E. Kirkegaard, "Mental Illness and the Left," *Mankind Quarterly,* 60 (2020): 487–510.
22 V. Kannan, J. Pacheco, K. Peters et al., "The relationship between health and political ideology begins in childhood," *SSM – Population Health*, 19 (2022): 101214.
23 M. Peterson and L. Laustsen, "Upper-Body Strength and Political Egalitarianism: Twelve Conceptual Replications," *Political Psychology,* 40 (2019): 375–394.
24 R. Arunachalam and S. Watson, "Height, Income and Voting," *British Journal of Political Science,* 48 (2018): 1027–1048.
25 R. Peterson and C. Palmer, "Effects of physical attractiveness on political beliefs," *Politics and Life Sciences*, 36 (2017): 3–16.
26 M. Price, S. Brown, A. Dukes and J. Kang, "Bodily Attractiveness and Egalitarianism are Negatively Related in Males," *Evolutionary Psychology,* 9 (2015): 140-166.
27 J. Bronski, "Evidence for a Paternal Age Effect on Leftism," *Open Psych* (2023).
28 Liberals are far more likely to distrust and dislike conservatives than *vice versa*. This would make sense in terms of high liberal Neuroticism and liberal Narcissism, in the sense that conservatives are puncturing the worldview which the liberal adopts in order to convince himself of his own moral superiority. See, P. H. Ditto, B. S. Liu, C. J. Clark et al., "At Least Bias Is Bipartisan: A Meta-Analytic Comparison of Partisan Bias in Liberals and Conservatives," *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 14 (2019): 273–291.
29 L. Conway, A. Zubrod, L. Chan et al., "Is the myth of left-wing authoritarianism itself a myth?" *Frontiers in Psychology,* 13 (2023).
30 C. Lin and T. Bates, "Each is to count for one and none for more than one: Predictors of support for economic redistribution" (2021), https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/3jq4c. For example, they are strong on the belief that "the ends justify the means" and are prepared to engage in instrumental harm and lying in pursuit of their goals. In addition, though claiming to believe in racial equality, liberals talk down to blacks in a way that conservatives do not. C. Dupree & S. Fiske, "Self-presentation in interracial settings: The competence downshift by White liberals," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 117 (2019): 579-604.
31 Moss and O'Connor, "The Dark Triad traits predict authoritarian political correctness and alt-right attitudes," *op cit.*
32 A. Clark, *Diaries: Into Politics, 1972–1982* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2000), 29th January 1978.

Chapter Two

Some Men are Born Posthumously

"Some men are born posthumously."

F. W. Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ*.

Defining the Far Right

What was it about Jonathan Bowden? How was this relatively short man—he was perhaps about 5 foot 6, who was also markedly overweight—able so to enrapture people? And why, since his untimely death at the age of 49 on 29th March 2012, has his fame and influence only grown? Why, in the words of his idol, the German philosopher F. W. Nietzsche (1844–1900), has Bowden been, "born posthumously?"[1]

In order to understand this, we need to make sense of Bowden's place in the "far right."[2] The Dutch political scientist Cas Mudde has argued that analysts should distinguish between two kinds of "far right." There is the "radical right," which espouses democracy and is reformist and populist. Then there is the "extreme right" which is more inclined to question democracy, advocates or predicts revolution, and tends to have a rather narrower supporter base.[3] In Mudde's model, populists such as Nigel Farage (b. 1964) or Donald Trump (b. 1946) would be distinguished from people such as Bowden; with regard to their degree of perceived radicalism. The Greek nationalist party Golden Dawn, who are openly Fascist, would clearly be "extreme right" and in that Bowden once said, in his speech "Credo: A Nietzschean Testament,"[4] "There's nothing wrong with Fascism," although he spoke with some levity, he could cautiously be categorized alongside them. Of course, no system of categories is perfect and there will always be groups that rest on the borders of any taxonomy. Category systems are useful only insofar as they allow correct predictions to be made about the likely behaviour and views of groups, or types more broadly, in given circumstances.

A number of other scholars also split up the "far right" into sub-categories that are, for example, illiberal-democratic (radical-right) and anti-

democratic (extreme-right). Another way of distinguishing the two is with regards to attitudes towards the liberal constitution, the rights of minorities or the rights of individuals. For the extreme right, these are unimportant compared to what is good for the ethnic community which is defined in racial terms. The radical right will define that community in a less exclusive fashion (based around shared culture, for example), will be more inclined to respect individual and group rights and won't espouse radical alterations to the liberal constitution. In other words, they are merely extreme conservatives; reactionaries. Yet another way of distinguishing the two is with regard to the extent to which they oppose moves towards and do not believe in equality between individuals and between groups.[5]

In "Credo," Bowden was clear that, "Inequality is natural and good." "Fascism" is, of course, an insulting and emotionally manipulative term that is synonymous with "extreme right." It has been argued that Fascism should be defined, in terms of negation, by being anti-liberal, anti-Communist and to some extent anti-conservative. In terms of ideology, it should desire an authoritarian state, wish to organize a multi-class and integrated economic structure, wish to create an empire and hold to an idealist or utopian creed. In terms of style, it should stress militarism, masculinity, youth, romantic and mystic dimensions, violence, and a leader's personal charisma.[6]

Yet other scholars summarise Fascism as palingenetic and populist ultra-nationalism; that is to say that it focuses on rebirth, race or ethnicity and populism,[7] or as "'an ideology that strives to forge social rebirth based on a holistic-national radical Third Way, though in practice fascism has tended to stress style, especially action and the charismatic leader, more than a detailed programme, and to engage in a Manichaean demonization of its enemies."[8] But, however it is defined, Bowden once stated, again in his presentation on Nietzsche, that, "There's nothing wrong with Fascism." Bowden's place in the far right is more specific, however. His place was in the New Right.

The European New Right and the National Front

Bowden was evidently influenced by Continental ideas and, most recently, by the *Nouvelle Droite* ("New Right") associated with French philosopher Alain de Benoist (b. 1943). Bowden even told a friend that he had met de Benoist in 1992,[9] which was not true. De Benoist told me that, "I have

never met Jonathan Bowden, and I am afraid that I have even never read a line of what he wrote. Actually, I did not know he passed away." In summary, the New Right argues for anti-egalitarianism; ethno-pluralism (maintaining distinct ethnic groups), the rejection of what it perceives as leftist totalitarianism; support for organic democracy; anti-Americanism; anti-capitalism; anti-liberalism; paganism; and for a European federation of culturally homogenous ethnic communities—a "Europe of a Hundred Flags."[10] Following the Gramscian idea of the "March through the Institutions," this school avers that, imitating the Left, political power can only be achieved by first taking cultural power, with reference to Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937).[11]

New Right ideas were most notably espoused in the UK by Michael Walker (b. 1954) a Durham University-educated journalist and playwright and also one time Central London Organiser for the National Front. The National Front, though never gaining any MPs or even councillors, was a highly prominent political party in the 1970s, having been established in 1967 in response to Labour's pro-immigration policies. The initial leader was A. K. Chesterton (1899–1973), the cousin of the author G. K. Chesterton (1874–1936). A. K. Chesterton was a former member of the British Union of Fascists who, in 1954, had established the League of Empire Loyalists. In 1967, this merged with the original British National Party; a party which was itself a conglomeration of the White Defence League, led by Colin Jordan (1923–2009), and the National Labour Party, led by John Bean (1927–2021). Jordan had previously led the National Socialist Movement while Bean had been active in Mosley's post-War Union Movement.[12]

The National Front—which also drew members from the right of the Conservative Party and had sympathisers within the Conservative Party-affiliated Monday Club (which we will explore below and of which Bowden was a member)[13]—became well-known for its marches in immigrant areas. By 1972, in which year it reached its peak membership of about 17,500,[14] the National Front was controlled by its chairman John Tyndall (1934–2005) and its National Organiser Martin Webster (b. 1943). Both men had been active in Colin Jordan's National Socialist Movement before leaving and forming the Greater Britain Movement. They eventually both joined the League of Empire Loyalists.

Between 1974 and 1976, Tyndall and Webster lost control of the National Front to the so-called populist faction (who were more moderate), and the party was led by J. Kingsley Read (1936–1985), a former member of Blackburn Young Conservatives. In 1976, Tyndall and Webster took control again. Read left the party, formed the National Party, and was elected to Blackburn Borough Council.[15] The National Front performed disappointingly in the 1979 General Election, with the Conservatives also promising to limit immigration. Tyndall resigned as leader in 1980 and split away to lead the New National Front. In 1982, Tyndall formed the British National Party (BNP). Bowden's friend Syd Bowmaker (b. 1962) stood for the BNP in Stevenage in Hertfordshire in the 1983 General Election, having joined the New National Front because the market in nearby historic Hitchin had gone from being "an affable place to one run by Asians. All the traditional stalls folded." From at least 1997, there was a growing "modernising" faction within the BNP centred around Nick Griffin (b. 1959) which aimed to imitate "euro-nationalist" parties.[16] Tyndall lost the BNP leadership to Nick Griffin in 1999, with Griffin aiming to soften the party's uncouth image, liberalise its policies (abandoning compulsory repatriation of non-whites for example), and move it away from anti-Semitism and towards anti-Islamism, stressing "culture" rather than "race;" though he maintained the ban on non-whites joining the party.[17] Nevertheless, there remained a significant stigma associated with voting for the party, let alone being involved with it, throughout Griffin's leadership; it had the taint, no matter how inaccurate, of skinheads, yobs and Nazis; simply beyond the pale.[18] As we will see, Bowden was a senior member of Griffin's BNP. Tyndall had been an open Nazi supporter in his youth, which caused serious image problems for any party with which he was associated.[19]

Walker expounded New Right philosophy in his magazine *The Scorpion* which he established in 1981 while still holding his position in the National Front. There was an attempt to ground this thinking in something British, specifically G. K. Chesterton's philosophy of Distributism: the widest possible distribution of productive property, the idealisation of small-scale craftsmanship, and the view that the family was mankind's natural unit, with ethnic groups being composed of families.[20] However, Chesterton was strongly Catholic and was opposed to paganism and to the extreme anti-

egalitarianism he saw as inherent in eugenics.[21] Clearly, the ideas of the New Right are Continental in origin. They were a development of the "extreme right" philosophy which we have already examined, the innovation being that totalitarianism is rejected in favour of organic democracy, this having been very much the platform of Nick Griffin's BNP, the history of which we will examine below.[22]

What is it About You?

With Bowden's place clear, we can begin to understand the reasons for Bowden's influence. In one of only two academic studies exclusively on him—"Examining the performance and political influence of a far right vanguard leader: The case of Jonathan Bowden"[23]—a group of researchers, led by American political scientist George Hawley, have attempted to establish the key reasons for his impact, while another study has ventured to summarise the essence of Bowden's philosophy.[24] Hawley and colleagues aver that though Bowden was a minor artist, playwright and novelist, he is mainly known for the speeches he gave to nationalist groups in rooms above English pubs. These were highly varied and idiosyncratic: Julius Evola, but also the history and nationalist dimensions of the Punch and Judy show beloved of the seaside holidays of the past; famous philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, but also obscure American pulp fiction writer Robert E. Howard (1906–1936); the Angry Young Men of the 1950s and the cartoon character Tintin. He even explored left-wing thinkers, with a view to understanding what the radical right could learn from their success, speaking on "Marxism and the Frankfurt School."[25]

There was something inherently fascinating, they argue, about Bowden's breadth of knowledge, delivered without notes; the way in which he could reveal unusual connections or elucidate the previously obscure. Since his death, an aura has developed around him as a thought-leader for a new generation; a generation that has been raised to be Woke—to place the leftist moral foundations of Equality and Harm Avoidance (which help you as an individual because you obtain more and you avoid harm) far above the conservative moral foundations of in-group loyalty, sanctity (lauding that which is good for the group and tabooing that which is bad for it and strong disgust at sources of pollution) and obedience to traditional authority[26] to the extent that women can have penises and children can be

allowed to identify as dogs—and is, naturally, rebelling against this. Studies indicate that this is what a portion of Generation Z is noticeably doing; hence their not being as left-wing as they should be in comparison to people double their age. There is evidence of polarisation in this age group, reflecting a growing anti-Woke rebellion.[27]

Bowden was, to some extent, the Weberian charismatic; the man gifted with certain skills that, for a people feeling a sense of crisis or meaninglessness, is able to make a cold world seem warm again. When there is no crisis, such a person is perceived as a crank, or is a charismatic only for a small group of troubled followers, but as a sense of crisis spreads so does his role as the charismatic. As German sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920) put it, "The term 'charisma' will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary . . ."[28] The Charismatic comes to lead, inspire and embody the community.

Bowden's extraordinarily engaging talks were, in some ways, a kind of performance art, as noted earlier. His lectures are not meant simply to be read, and the internet has allowed them to be preserved and widely disseminated in a way that could not have been true of people like Bowden from an earlier generation. There are a variety of other dimensions to his charisma, as discussed in the academic article on him: He used his real name, note Hawley and colleagues, despite the obvious financial and social dangers of being a dissident against the Woke regime. This indicated bravery and self-sacrifice. Bowden espoused a kind of Nietzsche-inspired philosophy: We must reject weakness, resentment and being part of the grievance hierarchy. We are in an evolutionary and spiritual battle in which, ultimately, the powerful will triumph. We must embrace power openly and fight, eternally, against weakness, such that we can bring about the triumph of our people. Before we continue our discussion of the proposed reasons for Bowden's popularity, let us pause to look at the precise nature of his philosophy.

What Was the Essence of Bowden's Philosophy?

A person's worldview, and identity, will change over time and we will see

below that Bowden exemplifies this, espousing extreme individualism in his early works. We are interested here in Bowden's philosophy during the period in which he delivered his famous orations.

In essence, and he admitted this, Bowden's was a pagan philosophy: the world is cyclical as are civilizations, with their inevitable seasons; that which is natural (adaptive in evolutionary terms) is good; inequality is, therefore, natural because the weak will be selected-out and the group will become ever-stronger; ever-closer to the gods, producing ever-more supermen who are, of course, superior to the herd. Harm is natural, and to a degree good, because it will make the stronger more resilient and it will cull the weak, who will only make the group less effective in the battle against other groups and make it less able to achieve greatness. We must strive to create this genius elite, this aristocracy; never giving up the fight against the weakness within us. Bowden summarised this in his speech, "Credo:"[29]

> There's a thinker who existed two-and-a-half thousand years ago called Heraclitus, and my type of thinking is his linear descendant . . . That thought and the sentience of nature is what we are. Nature has become sentient in us, which means we must incarnate natural law as a principle of being. It's called 'becoming' in my philosophy. The Right, even if you don't use that term, stands for nature and for that which is given.
>
> What does that mean? It means conflict is natural, and good. It means domination is natural, and good. It means that what you have to do in order to survive, is natural, and good. It means that we should not begin every sentence by apologizing for our past or apologizing for who we are . . .
>
> In my philosophy sympathy multiplies misery. And if somebody's in pain in front of you, you give them some options. And if they can't get through it, suicide's always an option.
>
> Now, what does Nietzsche believe? He believes that strength is moral glory. That courage is the highest form of morality. That life is hierarchical. That everything's elitist. There's a hierarchy in each individual, and a hierarchy in every group of individuals. There's a hierarchy between groups of individuals. Inequality is what Right-wing ideas really mean . . .
>
> Charles Maurras[30] was believed to be an atheist, but he led a Catholic fundamentalist movement in France. Why? Because if you are right-wing, you don't want to tear civilization down just because you privately can't believe. You understand the discourse of mass social becoming. What does a wedding mean? What does a death mean? What does the birth of a child mean? Unless there's something beyond it? What does a war mean? Just killing for money? Unless there's another dimension to it.

The notion of something "beyond" would seem to reach into the metaphysical. Bowden stated that he was "a pagan" and even wore a pendant upon which was inscribed the odal rune, usually understood to indicate a commitment to homeland and to the clan.[31]

Bowden implied, in the same speech, some form of metaphysical belief:

"Belief is an understanding that there are truths outside nature and outside the contingent universe that's in front of us that are absolute. The left-wing view that it's all relative or we make it up as we go along, is false . . . And the more primordial we are, the more we live in accordance with what we might become, the more we *link* with those concepts which are eternal and that exist outside us." In other words, there are certain eternal truths. This begs the question "What verifies them as true?" Implicitly, the answer is some kind of eternal being or force.

This could be summarised as a form of what the theologian Edward Bailey (1935–2015) termed "Implicit Religion," the idea that people who are not overtly religious—who do not overtly believe in a metaphysical reality—actually so-believe if you dig beneath the surface of how they discuss their worldview.[32] In his August 2011 presentation on T. S. Eliot (1888–1965), Bowden averred that though he was not advocating creating some kind of replacement religion, he was prepared to accept that he was espousing something close to this:

> One is often asked with figures as difficult, abstruse, and elitist as Eliot what the point of them is. The point is that they are transcendent figures. The point is that they look upwards. The point of all life is to look upwards in the prospect of something which is above you. Whether you believe God is above you, or you believe some other force is above you, or you believe the gods are above you, or you believe your ancestors are behind and above you, or you believe that the prospect of something else may exist, or you believe in philosophical verities that give three dimensional meanings to death, to sexuality, and to other things, you've got to look above you. Mosley once talked about endless, varied, and revivified forms getting higher and higher. That's a Platonic idea, a Neo-Platonic idea of the prospect of an archetype or an idealism that one can only approximate to.[33]

In the absence of this, Bowden argued, life has no meaning.

What are Traditionalism and Perennialism?

Bowden appears to be alluding to a form a philosophical Traditionalism, or Perennialism: that there are certain primordial metaphysical truths which are shared by all religions. These are intuitively known and an example is an eternal reality. We connect to this via long-established religious rituals or esoteric traditions which permit us direct knowledge of the eternal.[34] In other words, there is something eternal and religions are a reaction to it, a response to the numinous, to the *mysterium, tremendum et fascinans*; to the feeling that there is something eternal,[35] that there is something beyond the material world.

Such a belief, and the feeling reinforcing it, would be adaptive in terms of avoiding despair.[36] This is an understanding of religion which has been argued to be implicit in the discipline known as Religious Studies.[37] One of the first thinkers of the Traditionalist school, French philosopher René Guénon (1886–1951), converted to Sufi Islam, arguing that this was the closest religion to Christianity in which the tradition had been maintained.[38] Indeed, some Western sympathisers with this school are, accordingly, sympathetic with the Islamic Republic of Iran and its attempt to recreate some kind of traditional Shia Muslim society.[39] Understanding this philosophy is important because part of Bowden's talent was the way in which he was able to take this philosophy and make it appealing specifically to Anglophone followers.

For many Western traditionalists, pagan, polytheistic religions, such as Hinduism, are the closest that remains to a pure pre-Modern religion, though Bowden favoured a revived Nordic paganism rather than conversion to Hinduism. But inter-religious agreement, they maintain, is strong in relation to Hinduism, European paganism and Zoroastrianism. For others, the tradition has been sufficiently preserved in forms of Christianity and it might even be argued, as does French philosopher Alain de Benoist, that paganism and monotheism are a spectrum with multiple gods, multiple histories, cyclical history and a focus on blood-bonds (rather than bonds of belief) characterising paganism and the opposite characterising monotheism.[40]

The problem with paganism is that there is a lack of unity and you can't build large polities, meaning that you will be destroyed by large polities. As we move towards monotheism, we see the development of "Big Gods" who are concerned with morality and you can trust a stranger as long as you worship the same god, allowing for larger polities.[41] The problem arises, in evolutionary terms, when such religions are so monotheistic that they are too open to genetic strangers and have no concern with blood bonds whatsoever. Some kind of ideal balance, therefore, needs to be espoused which gets this relationship precisely right, such as syntheses between Christianity and the nationalist aspects of paganism or, perhaps, something like the Roman Cult of the Emperor. An example of this kind of thinking might be Christopher Dawson (1899–1970) who argued that Christianity was foundational to Western culture but was merely one expression of

perennial wisdom. However, even these tend to look back to what they regard as a more civilized, godly age, when we lived by this wisdom to a greater extent.[42] For those who look at the world through the Hindu lens, we have descended from a Golden Age, when we were truly in touch with the eternal tradition, to an age of darkness known as the "*Kali Yuga*," as René Guénon noted in *The Crisis of the Modern World*.[43]

From the broader Traditionalist viewpoint, however, since the Middle Ages, and especially since the Enlightenment, we have moved away from this mystical tradition. You can regain a connection to this tradition, and thus attain "self-realisation," via a form of mysticism that has remained since the Middle Ages, such as Sufism. Italian philosopher Julius Evola averred that this connection did not necessarily require religious mysticism, but could be made by following the path of the warrior; fighting to return to a more heroic tradition; by becoming the Nietzschean superman, to discipline oneself and sacrifice for the group. English musician and thinker Sir John Tavener (1944–2013) argued that the sacred tradition has been kept alive in Eastern Orthodoxy. Members of this school also espouse a relatively fixed hierarchy, rather like a caste system, in which you gain self-realisation by conforming to the archetype of this caste, unless you are in the wrong caste in which case you are likely to find yourself changing castes.[44] This creates a harmonious sense of order. We can see how this is congruous with many of the elements of Fascism as discussed above but also with most societies until relatively recently.

This was not a philosophy original to Bowden but he was able to present it cogently in an exciting and original way; unlike the philosophers themselves whose style is often opaque and verbose, as though they are a conservative version of Post-Modernism, presumably to wrap their ideas, and themselves, in a kind of quasi-religious profundity. For example, let us look at just one sentence by René Guénon:

> Moreover, words such as 'spirit' and 'matter,' which we borrow here from Western terminology for the sake of convenience, have little more than a symbolical value for us, in any case, they can be made to fit the question in hand only on condition that we exclude the special interpretations given to them by modern philosophy, whose 'spiritualism' and 'materialism' are, in our eyes, only two complementary forms which imply each other and are alike negligible for anyone who wishes to go beyond these contingent points of view.[45]

Bowden is much clearer than this. In effect, the Traditionalist worldview seems to be taking that which is adaptive for the group—which includes

conservative religious belief which has been shown to correlate with mental and physical health, fertility, ethnocentrism, and is an instinct which is activated in times of stress[46]—and justifying it philosophically: Force yourself to believe in the eternal and that humans are nature made sentient. Indeed, our "evolutionary match"—the situation to which Western people are adapted—is an agricultural ecology with high child mortality,[47] patriarchy,[48] religiosity (including the belief in moral gods), [49] struggle to survive (hence religiosity is associated with feeling excluded or disempowered),[50] and ethnic homogeneity.[51] Any serious deviation from this places us in an "evolutionary mismatch." This will create dysphoria; a feeling that things are just not quite right and adaptive instincts, such as the desire to have children, often won't activate when in this situation.[52] Bowden noted that modern society is so comfortable that, most people, the ethnocentric instinct, and related instincts such as religiosity, doesn't really activate: "a significant number of them have never been kicked, have never felt what it is as a group to be disprivileged in a society."[53]

In such circumstances, you might expect some people to try to recreate the ecology to which they are adapted; just as psychopaths will tend to create chaos—an easy but unstable, dangerous environment—because this is the environment in which they are adapted to thrive, a so-called fast Life History environment in which you live fast and die young. As the ecology becomes stable yet harsh (the evolutionary niche of Western people among others), the carrying capacity for the species is reached. Competing against each other, you invest less energy in sex and more in nurture. This is because if you have lots off offspring and don't invest in them then they will all die. You have fewer sexual partners for the same reason and you become very strongly adapted to a specific niche. Childhood becomes longer, so that you can learn more. You become more pro-social, because you'll only survive as part of a cooperative group. Patriarchy develops because if males must invest in a small number of females then they want to be certain that the offspring are theirs, so they must control female sexuality. Patriarchal inclinations are then selected for among females.[54] The psychopath will create the environment in which he flourishes.[55] The slow Life History Strategist appears to do the same.[56] So, in a sense, spiritually resigning from the modern world can be seen as an adaptive

response by people who are strongly evolved to our evolutionary match, though there are certain interesting nuances as to who will resign in such a way, as we will see later.

With these principles, these thinkers justify *inequality* and dominance over other groups. Thus, you live by a philosophy which is nakedly adaptive, in an evolutionary sense, so that it is *your* group that survives and triumphs meaning that your genes are passed on, sometimes only indirectly if you die in battle. For these traditionalists, you believe in maintaining and expanding the power of your ethnic group, you aspire to become a demi-god among your group by making your group even more powerful, and when you die you go to where the most powerful in your group live as a reward for your service to them. In Catholicism this may be dressed-up in religious terms: You, for example, inspire your group through your martyrdom, other people pray to you, and God's representative accords you greater status. Even if there is no direct belief in an afterlife, you become one with the source of power, following a Neo-Platonic line of thinking, or you become one with the universe, which is all-powerful. In Bowden's thinking, you become the energy of the universe; you become fire, as Bowden put it in "Credo."[57]

Traditionalism versus Postmodernism

The Postmodern worldview, or, rather, the simplification of postmodern philosophy that has entered popular discourse, is markedly different. This is manifest in the Scottish BBC journalist Laura Kuenssberg (b. 1976) who seems to think, based on an interview with the then Conservative Party leadership candidate and now Leader of the Opposition,[58] Kemi Badenoch (b. 1980), that you cannot state that one culture is better than another, meaning that reason is no better than superstition and each culture has its own truth.[59] Presumably, Kuenssberg would be as likely to see a Nigerian witch doctor as a Western medical doctor if she became seriously ill.[60] This thinking has trickled down the societal hierarchy , such that, in October 2024, in the face of being told an objective fact—that Hezbollah is a proscribed organization in the UK and that this is a fact and not an opinion—a Woman Police Constable, who was likely of roughly average intelligence,[61] responded: "That's your opinion that it's not an opinion."[62]

Following this kind of thinking, reality can be conceived of as a kind of

static noise within one's own mind; as though one is a paranoid schizophrenic dealing with different internal voices. One's mind has the supernatural ability, because one is God to the extent that one can even decide what sex one is, or "power" to create meaning and advance favourable narratives with regard to what is happening in this static noise. In this sense, this worldview is solipsistic; you control reality. To find an analogy, postmodernists (of this extreme form) believe reality is people arguing in an empty room over what's happening in a fictional story which they're all collectively telling, and whoever yells the loudest gets to "decide" what is happening. That is what power is, so to speak: loudness. In Bowden's words, ". . . men were born screaming; and when they stop; they die."[63] This is why postmodernists are so concerned about controlling other people's speech, because if they don't then reality will become that speaker's story. One could even aver that it is a feminine idea, insomuch as men will tend to engage in physical fighting whereas women will, in general, damage each other with words,[64] and women, compared to men, are low in systematizing; in wishing to comprehend the true nature of reality and in wishing to create hierarchies and to compete. However, they are very high in empathy; in concern with feelings and with everyone feeling equally validated.[65]

For such people, when you die, that is the end; it is over. When postmodernists say of "Anti-Racists" such remarks as "Rest in Power,"[66] they do not mean that the comrade that once existed in their head is resting somewhere, awaiting Judgement Day. They are expressing the idea that they are never at peace because they are always fighting the evil people who have power in order to attain power for themselves and the "marginalised" with whom they identify and about whom they pretend to care in order to covertly play for status by virtue-signalling their way to power. In reality, they see their martyr as a symbol of power: "We will carry on yelling what you were yelling." Possibly there is no separation between "word" and "person." You are what you yell and you must keep yelling until you are reassured that *your* narrative is the story; as though you are reassuring yourself, in a chaotic world, that you are in some kind of vaguely structured tale in which you are good.

This is a culture, in a sense, of living in your head; of solipsism—though, of course, it does impact the real world, most notably in being forced to

accept other people's delusions as true, because feelings and equality are so much more important than objectivity. This is a world, embodied in Generation Z, where almost nobody has known any physical suffering nor been prepared to deal with psychological suffering. It is a world of female teachers, the naughty step, no unsupervised play (lest bullying occur), "strict no bullying policies," no competitive sport, children not being allowed to bring birthday invitations to school lest the excluded are upset by it, permitting children to identify as dogs, masculinity being "toxic," criticism of one's views (as long as they are Woke) being "traumatic," and of your parents doing everything for you, including picking you up from school when you're a teenager and attending university open-days with you. It has resulted in people who are anxious about ordering from a restaurant menu unless they've seen it online first; because they're not used to doing things for themselves; people who don't drink as students because they are anxious about what might happen if they lose control, never having been permitted to take risks.[67] These are people who have been allowed to live in a fantasy world, in case the real world upsets them. According to Bowden's friend Adrian Davies (b. 1962), Bowden was a "virtual abstainer," preferring wine to beer, according his friend Eric Galati (b. 1953). Bowden's friend Stead Steadman (b. 1962) wondered if this was something to do with what he saw as Bowden's anxiety. He suggested that Bowden didn't drink because he was concerned about "not being in control."

Bowden's kind of philosophy is frightening because it forces postmodernists into the real world, which their reassuring worldview tells them doesn't even exist. The postmodernist is a female undergraduate with blue hair and a wordy placard about discrimination screaming at somebody in the distance. That "somebody," the Traditionalist, is suddenly covered in tribal tattoos and dressed in fur. He runs over to the postmodernist and cuts her down with an axe, then takes her to the university playing field and sacrifices her by ripping out her still beating heart. This is an extreme example, but a less extreme one, that is almost within living memory, is that the postmodernist is transported to a Victorian public school whose main aim is to prepare pupils for a harsh world in which they must fight for their group. For the slightest infraction, the postmodernist is birched on the bare buttocks until they bleed profusely and if the postmodernist expresses any emotion then the result is ruthless bullying by the other pupils who regard the flogging as entirely deserved and any inability to cope with it as

shameful cowardice, as though they have failed the tribal test of masculinity.[68] This world is red in tooth and claw; it is death, it is suffering; it is fighting to survive.

Arguments for Traditionalism

Perhaps it could be averred that, from a shared vantage point, such as "I value the pursuit of truth," you could argue yourself into an implicit belief in something eternal: "What verifies it as true? Why do you hold this fundamental belief? Are you not implicitly struggling towards something greater?" Similarly, following the pragmatism of American philosopher and psychologist William James (1842–1910) maybe it could be advanced that if you value civilization and you accept the abundant evidence that civilizations that lose their religious belief tend to become decadent, individualistic, Balkanized and then collapse and become invaded by religious and united outsiders,[69] then you should force yourself, via effortful control, to believe in God.[70]

A problem with this line of reasoning might be that it could be countered, "You enjoy being in a community, yes? So always force yourself to conform to the dominant worldview, for the good of community cohesion." Clearly, this is not what Perennialists do, though they might argue that you should only conform to an evolutionarily adaptive worldview. That said, some Perennialist philosophers, such as the Russian Alexandr Dugin (b. 1962) claim, as he did in an interview with me in 2021, not to accept evolutionary theory in relation to humans, because it is modernist. Bowden, however, did accept evolution:

> People are unequal: 75% of it is genetic and biological. Partly criminality's biological; predispositions to drug addictions are biological; intelligence is biological; beauty is biological; ferocity or a predisposition to it is biological; intellect is biological. You can do a bit, but you're born to be which you are, and we should celebrate what we were born to be, because we have created 90% of value in modernity.[71]

It might also be pointed out that if we refute extreme postmodernism—that there is no such thing as objective truth, with all "truths" merely being justifications for a group's power—by arguing that it fails the test of pragmatism because you can't live as though there's no objective truth, then, following this, we can't live as though life has no meaning, so we must embrace eternal meaning. But then it can be countered that people do survive with this view, even if they are unhappy.

But this is all by the by. Perennialism is not founded on these pragmatic arguments. Instead, you feel the *mysterium, tremendum et fascinans* and so you know it to be real, much as you might feel, when in love, that life has eternal meaning and so accept this to be true. This is despite the fact that being in love releases the same chemicals which make you more instinctive, rendering you more religious—and more likely to believe in components of religion, such as fate and eternal meaning—when you are in love.[72]

British Philosophy's Resistance to Idealism

Idealist in nature, Perennialism is a Continental rather than English philosophy, as already noted, with the Anglophone World tending towards analytic philosophy (with a focus on formal logic) and empiricism, and a rejection of metaphysics as meaningless. As already alluded to, one of Bowden's achievements is to make this philosophy palatable to Anglophone people.

Empiricism is best exemplified in the key thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment: Edinburgh University's David Hume (1711–1776) and Aberdeen University's Thomas Reid (1710–1796). Hume asserted: "If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, 'Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No.' Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion."[73] Reid espoused the principle: "That those things do really exist which we distinctly perceive by our senses, and are what we perceive them to be."[74] This is known as "Common Sense" philosophy. It contrasts with idealist philosophy, which stresses the role of the spiritual in interpreting experience, and rationalism, which avers that there are certain *a priori* truths that can be intuitively apprehended.

Nietzsche was appalled by empiricism, writing: "They are not a philosophical race—the English: Bacon represents an ATTACK on the philosophical spirit generally, Hobbes, Hume, and Locke, an abasement, and a depreciation of the idea of a 'philosopher' for more than a century."[75] If we look at the ten most influential British, French and German philosophers of the twentieth century, as rated by philosophers, then 78 per cent of British philosophers are Analytic, whereas 82 per cent of German

philosophers and 93 per cent of French philosophers are Continental.[76] There was a school known as British Idealism, led by F. H. Bradley (1846–1924), who was a significant influence on the poetry of T. S. Eliot,[77] on whom Bowden gave a presentation on 6th August 2011, as we explored earlier.[78] Bradley averred that there was an underlying reality, called the Absolute, and appearances are merely attempts to represent this.[79]

In addition, it might be argued that Thomas Carlyle anticipated Traditionalism. He viewed history and human progress as being forged by great men, whom he termed "heroes." Society, he averred, needed to recognise these heroes, men who were guided by a combination of inner steel and divine insight, leading to Carlyle's rejection of the mediocrity of democracy.[80] In this narrow sense, his worldview can be seen as similar to that of Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679).[81] Carlyle loathed the Industrial Revolution, averring that life should be focused not on prosperity but on duty and, ultimately, finding metaphysical purpose.[82] But Idealism was clearly less influential in the UK than on the Continent. Bowden's one-time collaborator Stuart Millson (b. 1965) recalled that Bowden described himself as a "European fundamentalist . . . He preferred Ernst Jünger[83]—and his attitude of 'Never say die!' to the British war poets, whom he regarded as defeatist." For Bowden, the English were an ethnic group, held together by common ancestors, distinct from the Celts; but they were also British and "white" and "Indo-European."[84] Bowden wished to regenerate not just British culture but European culture as a whole. He opposed the EU because of its failure to be pro-European: He wanted to introduce New Right Philosophy to Britain.[85] Downstream from this English culture of pragmatism, it has been argued that the British associate Continental Philosophy with Continental ideological-based revolution; with Communism, Romantic Nationalism and especially Nazism,[86] rendering them sceptical of it.

Bowdenising New Right Ideas

All this being so, then one advantage of Bowden is that he presents an essentially Continental Philosophy in the cloak of something deeply English. Listeners can be uplifted by a sort of priest of English nationalism, and by a sermon which taps into ideas that seem to inspire and make sense,

without feeling that they are in the presence of some pretentious, un-English "intellectual."

Similarly, the English seem to be highly tolerant of eccentrics, because, as we will see, geniuses are often eccentric and can produce ideas that benefit their group by questioning convention. We might call this a "genius strategy;" where the group, by brooking genius, can come to dominate more ethnocentric (internally cooperative and externally hostile) groups, with ethnocentrism generally predicting dominating other groups in computer models.[87] However, armed with their inventions, the genius-strategy group can dominate them, as long as its level of ethnocentrism does not fall too low.[88] We would expect people who were under threat from external invasion to be less tolerant of dissent and thus of eccentricity, but we might stereotypically expect the English to be relatively attracted to eccentricity, and a variety of studies have argued that this is so; highlighting the English culture of non-conformity historically,[89] a general penchant for eccentricity gleaned from anthropological research,[90] and the notion that eccentricity became part of English national identity in the nineteenth century.[91] Thus, with Bowden, Continental Philosophy is smuggled into the English unconscious via English levity and eccentricity, bypassing the white blood cells of English empiricism and aversion to the radical.

Risk, Art and Identifiable Flaws

Returning to Hawley and colleagues' analysis, another attractive dimension to Bowden is that he took chances, particularly in terms of his nightmarish faux-Kandinsky abstract art; his unreadable and opaque stream-of-consciousness novels (which remind me of Beckett's *Not I* and which we will analyse in greater depth later),[92] but also in his unscripted speeches. He wrote about Samuel Beckett's (1906–1989) style in his own book *Skin*.[93] One of Bowden's friends referred to his prose thus: "His novellas and short stories are almost unreadable, but all the same the prose is incredible, uniquely pyrotechnic . . . in its use of metaphor, vocabulary, and striking juxtapositions."[94] This risk-taking in pursuit of what he feels and believes has the potential not to pay off, but he was fervent enough to take the risk and it paid off not in terms of his novellas but in terms of his speeches. This risk-taking can be inspiring and certainly signals a kind of genuineness.

Bowden was an artist as well as a thinker, so he understood, explicitly

from his reading, how to successfully transmit his ideas; the brilliant teacher, he could make the world make sense for his audience. Bowden had a way with words; he would leave other speakers thinking, "I wish I'd said that!" He was acerbically witty. Such was his way with words that left-wing journalist Owen Jones (b. 1984) quoted Bowden in his 2011 book *Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class:* "Labour's treacherous lies and cardinal betrayal of the working classes is obvious to all. But the really good news is that the radical left have all but vanished from defending the working classes."[95] Some of the radical right's favourite phrases—such as "Clear them out!" (with reference to the Labour Party)[96]—originate from the "Beast of Berkshire."[97] Bowden had an extraordinarily detailed breadth of knowledge, ranging from pop culture—he once analysed *Judge Dredd* comics,[98] was fascinated by comic book superheroes more generally, enjoyed pop culture so long as it promoted the heroic in a context of a collapsing liberal system in which vigilantes (like Batman) were required,[99] and his favourite television program was the US police drama series *Hawaii Five-O*[100]—to the esoteric, meaning he presented himself as an extremely intelligent and knowledgeable man; an expert, one worth listening to.

Most importantly, Bowden, in a sense made the ultimate sacrifice by dying and dying prematurely. This would have imbued him with a prophet-like status; an aura of the other-worldly. In this regard, studies have found that when a charismatic leader dies, and especially if he dies suddenly, then he is suffused with greater charisma. He is perceived as being "one with the group" and representing the group to a greater extent. Death renders him, somehow, fused with the collective.[101]

In addition, and Hawley and colleagues did not look at this, there is an extent to which Bowden seemed, in some respects, slightly childlike and helpless. Studies have found that people who sometimes make mistakes are regarded as more relatable,[102] that childlike traits, including slight helplessness, make people more engaging,[103] and that charismatic leaders often have a childlike enthusiasm and naivety.[104] In comparing her husband to Hitler, Diana, Lady Mosley (1910-2003) observed that Hitler possessed this attractive quality of slight helplessness: "When people met Hitler they thought: here is this wonderful but unfortunate man who seems to have all of the cares of the world on this shoulders, so we must do all we can to help

him."[105]

I would further add that Bowden also had an "identifiable flaw:" He was short and overweight. It has been argued that, counter-intuitively, this is an aspect of charisma; of gaining a following. It allows ordinary people to identify better with you and so bond more strongly with you.[106] As we will see later, Bowden suffered from serious mental health problems and was, essentially, penniless. A childless bachelor, Bowden lived alone in a decrepit caravan in a caravan park in Reading, never really worked, had an old mobile phone and didn't have the internet where he lived, so he used to research his essays at the local library.[107]

For some this might add to his charisma: he sacrificed the worldly so that he could dedicate himself to his research, his art and to promulgating his ideas. Diogenes the Cynic (412–323 BC) lived in a barrel in Sinope in what is now northern Turkey; Bowden lived in a mobile home in dreary Reading. As Bowden put it in his 2009 interview *Why I Am Not a Liberal*, "I'm probably a Bohemian. There's an artistic element in me. I don't care for bourgeois respectability. It doesn't bother me. That's where the leaders of the extreme right often come from. They actually come from the arts as much as from the academy or from the intelligentsia, and the arts are a psychologically very radical part of the society, and therefore you don't care as much for, you know, being regarded as a bit of a demon."[108] But, certainly, these are identifiable flaws. They all contribute to his charisma, but what is the psychology of the charismatic? What kind of minds do they have?

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CHAPTER THREE

The Psychology of the Charismatic

"Not by wrath does one kill, but by laughter. Come, let us kill the spirit of gravity!"

F. W. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*.[1]

What Are Charismatics Like?

One person whom I interviewed in researching this book cautioned me against writing it at all. Precisely because of Bowden's charisma, there are people who are devotees of his; who borderline worship him as a based saviour. Presenting his biography would inevitably dispel some of the magic and upset people like this. They would feel cognitive dissonance, descend into denial and even become enraged.

Researching a biography, scrutinising anyone's life in depth, tends to unearth a few less pleasant aspects of them. This shouldn't be surprising with someone prominent, for unpleasantness is part of the nature of the genius. In general, social status is predicted by intelligence (how quickly you can solve a cognitive problem combined with how difficult it is before you're stumped) and the personality traits of Conscientiousness (impulse control and rule-following), low Neuroticism (mental stability, not feeling negative feelings strongly) and Agreeableness (altruism and empathy).[2] The other personality traits are Extraversion (feeling positive feelings strongly, being sociable) and Openness (intellectual curiosity, being open to new possibilities). Together, these are known as the Big 5.[3]

Such was his agreed talent, and growing subsequent influence, that it might be argued that, for those on the radical right at least, Bowden was an oratorical genius. Studies of geniuses—those who are widely agreed, via convergent bibliography for example, to have had a huge impact in some particular field—and of highly creative and original scientists, writers and artists (the semi-genius, if you like) concur that the genius is characterized by a combination of very high intelligence and moderately *low* Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, as well as being relatively mentally unstable, prone to anxiety and depression. This makes sense, in terms of

scientific geniuses, because new ideas offend against vested interests and involve "thinking outside the box;" thinking the unthinkable. If you are low in Agreeableness then you either won't understand that your new idea will offend people because you will have the autistic trait of low cognitive empathy, as scientific geniuses, at least, tend to.[4] Or, if you are low in altruism, you won't care that your ideas offend people. In fact, moderately high in the psychopathic traits of low Agreeableness and low Conscientiousness and high Neuroticism (especially anger and hatred), you might enjoy offending the conformist herd. Low in Conscientiousness, you will be able to think outside the box and high in Neuroticism, you will be constantly thinking and ruminating,[5] and you will want to structure what you experience as a chaotic and frightening world.[6]

As we move from scientific to literary, political or artistic geniuses, geniuses become more mentally unstable and simply more unpleasant. They become higher in psychopathic traits. Other psychopathic traits are superficial charm, grandiosity, a constant need for stimulation, pathological lying, lack of remorse, manipulation, lack of empathy, lack of long term relationships, a parasitic lifestyle and a lack of long-term goals. German-British psychiatrist Felix Post (1913–2001) conducted a character-trait analysis of 291 world famous men. He found that 17.8 per cent of world famous scientists are severely psychopathic, as were 17.4 per cent of politicians, 37.5 per cent of artists, 26 per cent of thinkers, and 46 per cent of writers. About 1 per cent of people in Western populations are psychopathic.[7]

Why Are Geniuses Mentally Unstable?

As we move from famous scientists to famous writers, depression and anxiety also increase, though Post found that these were relatively high even among the world famous scientists. He estimated that 33 per cent of his sample of world famous scientists had suffered from depression or anxiety, as had 41 per cent of his politicians, 34 per cent of his composers, 36 per cent of his thinkers, 41 per cent of his artists and 72 per cent of his writers. Approximately 20 per cent of people in Western countries experience a bout of depression at some point in their lifetimes. Post also found that having an unhappy childhood—marked by the death of a parent or the abandonment of the family by the father, for example—was relatively

high among these world famous creative people. Certainly, 56 per cent of writers, the category with the highest prevalence of psychopathy, had unhappy childhoods, as against 26 per cent of thinkers and, least often, 10 per cent of composers.

That said, he found evidence that the brilliance of these men was partly heritable: "48% of thinkers and 22% of writers, as well as 20% of scientists, had relatives who had excelled in different disciplines, a very infrequent finding in the case of composers, artists, and politicians." This implies that environment plays a larger part in political, musical and artistic genius than it does in major literary and scientific accomplishment. That said, it should be noted that many composers do come from musical families. Post's analysis dealt only with extremely eminent composers.

Why Are Many Geniuses Autistic?

It is possible that the mental instability associated with genius is a product of autism, at least in part. Autistics become easily overwhelmed as they cannot filter out stimuli in the way that normal people can. Consequently they experience sensations very intensely, including the sensations of their own bodies, which mean that they experience emotions with great magnitude. Related to this, they can easily become traumatised, leading to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).[8] They cannot cope with change, they have a strong need for order and structure and, for this reason, autistics will often develop obsessions. Autistics have poor cognitive empathy and they must live in a social world they do not understand, potentially resulting in depression, which is elevated among autistics, mediated by anxiety, and simply in high anxiety.[9] But, on the other hand, worry and anxiety, within certain boundaries, may act as an incentive to be diligent and to not give up (for example, you may worry that someone else will beat you to the discovery) and they may be alleviated by problem-solving—giving life structure—or the creation of original work. In addition, in that they take in more information, autistics will be better equipped to notice unusual connections; a key component of creativity.

Consistent with the importance of structure, people who are high in Neuroticism go through phases of religious fervour, in which they may undergo intense religious experiences.[10] This implies that Neuroticism is partly alleviated by the world having some kind of clear, predictable order. Such experiences are also examples of dissociation; in which a person

enters a trance-like state in which they are partly or completely separated from the real world. In that many geniuses either attempt to understand the structure of the world, express the structure of the world as they perceive it or literally make the world more structured, we can understand why Neuroticism and autism would be associated with genius. Similarly, Neuroticism is associated with being attracted to fringe religious and political groups and to conspiracy theories,[11] presumably because they—potentially—offer structure and also because the latter reflect negative feelings, such as paranoia or a loathing of the mainstream. They are, therefore, of interest to the Neurotic and thus to the genius, with his interest in structure and making sense of the world. "Perhaps they might help in my quest to make sense of the world," he thinks.

As an aside, one might wonder why a person with autistic traits, and its attendant high Neuroticism (which can lead to personality disorders, see below), might be attracted to extreme conservatism rather than to extreme liberalism. One possibility is that if the autism were accompanied by psychopathy then there would be an attraction to rocking the boat and upsetting people pushing you to the right in a leftist society. By contrast, if it were accompanied by Narcissism or Machiavellianism (hunger for power, manipulative behaviour towards this aim and regarding people as a means to an end) then hyper-conformity would potentially lead to power and Narcissistic supply, and a study has demonstrated that leftists are higher in these pathologies.[12] These three traits inter-correlate into the Dark Triad Personality,[13] so the reasons may, in many cases be even subtler. Autism, Dark Triad traits and many other psychological constructs involve shopping lists of symptoms. An autistic might, for example, be so high in an aversion to change that it overwhelms everything else and pushes him towards the right. Alternatively, a Neurotic might be so high in resentment that they despise all symbols of power and tradition and this pushes them towards the left.

What is Borderline Personality Disorder?

Drawing on this information, we can begin to understand why autism would be associated with political genius or charisma, but to further understand this connection requires an aside. This is because the connection may be mediated by Borderline Personality Disorder. Autism may lead to this and this may lead to genius.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder has relatively similar symptoms, and causes, to Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), though the latter is regarded as more common in females than in males. Borderline Personality Disorder is characterised by highly unstable and extreme moods, poor emotional regulation, a fundamental fear of abandonment and of being alone, pronounced feelings of shame, intense and unstable relationships (including sexual risk-taking, perhaps due to a feeling that "love" may not come again) and unstable goals and even sense of identity, due to being plagued by intense negative feelings (such as shame, anxiety, self-loathing and self-doubt), and a weak sense of self. A radical identity change, from one extreme to another, would potentially exemplify this condition. Sufferers have a weak sense of self in the sense that our personalities sit within various ranges on scales, such as high to low psychopathy. Most people operate within relatively narrow ranges, depending on environmental factors, on these scales. A person with a weak sense of self will, especially under stress, dramatically swing to the extremes of these scales, meaning that they will seem like they are different people at different points; histrionic at one point, entirely avoidant a few days later.[14] About 20 per cent of sufferers also have bipolar depression, where they swing from mania to profound depression. Those who have both conditions have even more extreme BPD symptoms.[15]

In that sufferers from Borderline Personality Disorder cannot regulate their emotions, they cannot regulate their self-esteem; so it may swing between grandiose Narcissism (believing one is perfect, superior and being entitled), as an attempt to suppress their fears, and feelings of abject worthlessness, and self-loathing. For the same reason, their identity and goals can radically change in accordance with these swings in self-esteem. When they are Narcissistic, and receiving Narcissistic supply, they, for example, may decide to leave the boyfriend, upon whom they are parasitic and who they don't really love, for their high status lover. When they are feeling worthless and insecure, due to an event that has provoked this, such a risk may seem intolerable, so they will continue with the original relationship which they may have only embarked on due to being lonely. They also feel some forms of disgust very strongly, especially disgust with themselves,[16] but others only very weakly.[17] It has been averred that this reflects abnormal sensory processing.[18] This may also be a matter of

emotional dysregulation; in which there are only extremes and no middle ground in terms of disgust, something often found with children's tastes.

Due to their fear of abandonment, such people will tend to idealise those with whom they have relationships, something which will appeal to Narcissistic males and induce the grandiose notion, in the male, that he is her saviour. This is a way of suppressing their anxiety about potential problems in the relationship that may cause it to end. It evidences their relatively immature way of seeing the world and their desire for someone to fill the void of emptiness which they often feel. In other words, they cannot cope with their extreme negative feelings, so they create a fantasy world which produces positive feelings; this perfect person being their rescuer.[19] However, an element of their development is stuck at a child-like stage, as with their disgust experiences, meaning that people are either "good" or "evil" and they may adopt very different selves—very loving or very hateful—to deal with people accordingly.

They will, therefore, engage in "splitting," where they will rapidly move from idealising to devaluing their partner or, indeed, their child. This will repel many Narcissistic males. This splitting may happen because they will have a very strong reaction to something negative which the partner does. This punctures the fantasy, so they cope with their conflicted feelings, and take power and control over the situation, by telling themselves that the partner is actually evil; he has wilfully caused these negative feelings. They may even wrongly infer that the partner will abandon them, leading to intense negative feelings, the view that the partner is evil and the belief that they are under threat. This cathartic outlet of negativity can make them feel better and they will gradually return to idealisation. Fearing abandonment, they may cause their partners to abandon them via their paranoid and aggressive reactions to minor indications of this possibility or they may pre-emptively abandon their partners, thus maintaining a sense of control. They will oscillate between abandonment-anxiety and intimacy-anxiety as, for them intimacy is associated with abandonment and even abuse.

They also suffer from engulfment anxiety. On the one hand they crave intimacy, with its reassurance that they will not be abandoned, but on the other, they fear being left trapped with another person, who may then turn on them and devour them precisely because they have become so close to him, meaning they reject him. In other words, they fear being dominated; they associate intimacy with abandonment and pain. The rejection allows

the Borderline to probe what she can get away with in relation to her partner, creates an addictive sense of drama and heightened arousal which allows painful introspection to be avoided, and helps to foster a trauma bond, where the partner is addicted to their love-bombing and feels that only the Borderline can take away the pain that she has inflicted. The result is continuous cycles of fear of abandonment, fear of engulfment and fear of abandonment again.[20] During these cycles, they will be highly manipulative to attain the relationship-type they desire. It may be that, because their needs were not met as children and parenting was inconsistent, based on the capricious mood of the parent, they have learned to be manipulative in order to attain their needs; they have developed the skill set. They have a tendency to lie, in order to persuade themselves that reality is congruous with their intense feelings. For example, they might have sex with someone, regret this and so tell themselves, and others, that it never happened. Under stress, such people will degenerate into psychosis, where they become dissociated from reality and even have paranoid delusions that they are under threat, in which they can feel a sense of gnosis and thus control. This is a method, other than fantasy, of coping with a reality that is impossibly frightening and malevolent. These episodes can last from minutes to days. Put simply, they become psychopathic, something which can be adaptive in situations of extreme peril and uncertainty.

There is evidence that Borderlines ultimately end up with partners who suffer from depression (which crosses over with the borderline's anxiety), though not from BPD itself, and also with men with avoidant personalities; in other words, rather insecure males.[21] It is theorised that BPD is caused by a combination of genetics and childhood neglect or abuse, where parenting is inconsistent at best, and so the child creates anxious attachments and sees the world, and those who love her, as unpredictable, dangerous and likely to abandon her or harm her. This helps to explain the cycling between a desire for intimacy and a fear of abandonment, and, also, a fear of intimacy and an engulfment anxiety. Whereas the sense of self of a normal person will be relatively consistent and perhaps gradually move between slightly different personas, the BPD sense of self is fractured between what may seem like markedly different people who manifest to deal with different challenges. The BPD sufferer will dissociate, adopting, without even realising it, quite different personalities in different situations. Such people may have coped with traumatic childhood situations via dissociation, via entering a fantasy

world, and this continues into adulthood in the form of one or more selves adopted in stressful situations, possibly with different memories. Sometimes sufferers will have amnesia with regard to these dissociative episodes.[22]

However, it has also been found that those who dissociate are prone to pseudo-memories, suggestibility and fantasy with little evidence of early abuse being causal.[23] Consistent with this, identical twin studies have found that there is a relatively high heritability to personality disorders, such as BPD, of around 0.5.[24] People with this disorder may be likely to abuse their children,[25] but the disorder will likely develop independent of such abuse. Inconsistent parenting may lead to fear of abandonment and intense negative feelings, but also intense positive feelings, especially if the child is of an extravert temperament. This is because happy events provide euphoric relief from a dangerous world, because positive events feel so much stronger by comparison, because a deep need for affection is met and because they have a more reactive emotional system. In a sense, BPD can be understood to be a kind of specific fast Life History adaptation, wherein both positive and negative feelings are intense. According to his friend Eric Galati, Bowden "would work through the night, and sleep through the morning**.** He would awake at mid-day." A neighbour of Bowden's told his friend the Spanish-Slovenian writer and artist Alex Kurtagic (b. 1970) that Bowden's lights would regularly still be on at 4am.[26] Being a night owl is a fast Life History strategy trait, possibly because it allows socio-sexual people to better get away with illicit activity, including illicit sexual activity.[27]

Such people may feel as though they are externally controlled, that they are not in control of themselves or that the boundaries between themselves and others are unclear, meaning that they assume others will know how they feel. Borderline Personality Disorder is about 40 per cent genetic.[28] Environmental insults at an early stage, such as being born prematurely or a difficult birth (such as a breech birth) are also associated with Borderline Personality Disorder.[29] As noted above, inconsistent parenting—capriciously oscillating between over-involvement and neglect, according to fluctuating mood—creates a frightening and unpredictable world in which the child will feel that love is not a given. This will lead it to fear abandonment and to fail to develop a clear sense of who she is in a relation

to a stable external reality. She may see herself as different types of people at different points and lie so that reality appears to fit in with this.[30]

Why is Autism Associated with Borderline Personality?

There is also some overlap between Borderline Personality and autism, with the mediating factor being anxiety and depression. The association is stronger among females, with the key crossover being on noticing details and lacking social skills.[31] Indeed, female autistics, being more socially anxious, will pretend to be normal, leading to exhaustion, loss of identity (as they force themselves to fit in) and a sense of not belonging, which further induces anxiety. Also, easily overwhelmed, such as due to overstimulation; autistic females can easily become angry. They feel sensations more strongly, including the bodily sensations that relate to emotion. Desiring to fit in can also make them naïve to exploitation. As one research group has summarised:

> Both ASD [*Autism Spectrum Disorder*] and BPD individuals can apparently present a similar pattern of interpersonal relationships, identity disturbance, impulsivity, affective lability, and difficulty controlling anger. The *acting out* instead of verbalizing emotions, intense and dysfunctional relationships and superficial friendships in BPD, and social/quality communication difficulties, the effort of adapting to social norms and expectations in female ASD can phenotypically overlap and turn diagnostic evaluation into a challenge.[32]

There is also evidence of autism and BPD simply being likely to be comorbid, with autism rendering BPD even more pronounced. Indeed, one study found that half of patients with BPD scored above the cut-off point for autism.[33] Being highly sensitive, autistics are more likely to suffer from complex PTSD, which involves most of the symptoms of BPD and, indeed, can lead to BPD.[34] For example, autistics are more likely to be bullied, which may lead to BPD.[35]

Autism, Narcissism and Charisma

So, we can see how, via intense anxiety and unpleasant experiences, an autistic may become a Narcissist, including as part of BPD. How does this all relate to charisma?

Among performers and artists, Narcissism is highly elevated.[36] With Narcissistic Personality Disorder, you deal with intense negative feelings by telling yourself that you are special and wonderful, as noted earlier. This "Grandiose Narcissism" manifests in your entitlement, extreme confidence

and in manipulative behaviour such that you can obtain Narcissistic supply: a world that tells you how wonderful you are. These Grandiose Narcissists are, thus, attracted to performance and they ooze confidence. They are low in Agreeableness, high in Extraversion and, when they actually have Narcissistic Personality Disorder, high in Neuroticism, as with BPD.[37] When something potentially confronts them with their true self, and threatens their ideal self, they can react with Narcissistic Rage in order to deal with this and they can, sometimes, briefly breakdown; with the damaged true self revealed.[38] Such people will always want to seem powerful, to bolster the false self via which they have learned to cope with the world. As we have already noted, people with BPD or PTSD will go through periods of Narcissism and Autism is associated with PTSD, BPD and the general intense Neuroticism than can lead to Narcissism.

The charismatic is likely to display Narcissistic Personality Disorder, at least to some degree. He has adopted a false self which he believes is perfect. Consequently, he will embody confidence; he will seem like the sort of person you might want to follow. If he is high in verbal intelligence, then his autism will render him extremely adept at making unusual connections. He will be superb in terms of telling jokes and in terms of producing extremely moving and insightful metaphors. Such a person, receiving Narcissistic supply from his audience, will display ever greater confidence, in a kind of feedback loop. As the autistic gets older, he will have become an expert at "masking"—at noticing what neuro-typical people do and imitating it—so his "charisma" will be likely to activate relatively late compared to ordinary confidence. In addition, he will experience feelings intensely and this will help to, in effect, hypnotize the audience. His persona will also be highly convincing because autistics are prone to a form of dissociation known as absorption. They are drawn into a fantasy world, in order to cope with the external one, and they can project this outwards meaning that they really will seem like their fantasy self.[39] The autistic Narcissist may not be able to instinctively "read the room," but he will broadcast his own brilliance, which will likely reduce his anxiety. In addition, it could be argued that people who see the world as dangerous and unstable must teach themselves to be exploitative and there is an extent to which charismatic speaking exploits people; it hypnotizes them into something akin to worshipping you.

Also, with reference to masking, geniuses tend to be late-developers to some extent. Isaac Newton (1643-1727) performed poorly in his degree,[40] while Francis Crick (1916–2004) failed to obtain an Oxbridge scholarship so he attended University College London as the fees were lower, for example.[41] This may be because the negative aspects of autism, such as intense anxiety or lack of social skill, are gradually overcome, or dealt with, as the sufferers get older. In addition, in a world of chaos, it is hard to know who you are and what you want, not least because you are plagued with self-doubt. Hence, you will experiment with different identities and possibilities for rather longer than most people, causing you to find out what you really want later in life.

What is the Nature of Genius Intelligence?

Genius intelligence is also different from that of ordinary intelligence. There are two ways of defining genius intelligence. The first is simply very high intelligence, of the kind held by those who might qualify to be in Mensa. Intelligence only correlates with socioeconomic status at about 0.5, demonstrating that there are other factors, such as personality traits, that are highly relevant.[42] The second is with regard to the sort of intelligence that widely acknowledged geniuses appear to have. We will concentrate here on the latter sort of intelligence. Geniuses, in our sense of the word, often have very high but also skewed intelligence. They may, for example, be superb verbally and mathematically but have appalling spatial intelligence and so be unable to drive a car. They may be supreme intellectuals, but utterly impractical; unable to hold down a job or cook their own food. This is partly a reflection of the nature of high intelligence.

There are different kinds of intelligence such as verbal, spatial and mathematical ability in these inter-correlates giving rise to the concept of general intelligence (*g*), which underpins all of them. In fact, intelligence is even more nuanced than this. It can be conceived of as a pyramid. At the base of the pyramid there are very specific "specialized abilities" that are only weakly correlated with *g*. These include traits such as way-finding, the ability to solve social problems ("emotional intelligence") and even extremely narrow skills such as to catch a ball, drive a car, do up your shoe laces, or throw a dart at a target. Each of these "specialized abilities" is weakly predicted by *g* but also predicted by other mental traits, such as personality traits. These abilities correlate with each other to different

degrees, meaning that we can factor them into three broader forms of intelligence: verbal, spatial and mathematical. These are themselves *g*-loaded (associated with *g*) to different degrees, but they can, ultimately, all be reduced to *g*. Among adults, intelligence is about 80 per cent genetic.[43] Charismatic people, being skilled in symbolic communication, tend to be highly intelligent; there is a degree to charisma is a signal of intelligence.[44]

Raw intelligence—the ability to solve cognitive problems—increases up to middle age, so we measure it with reference to a cohort of your own age; hence Intelligence Quotient (IQ). The higher a person's IQ is then the weaker is the positive relationship between the different forms of intelligence.[45] Most people score roughly equally in terms of verbal, linguistic or spatial intelligence, but this becomes decreasingly the case the higher a person's IQ is. This means that at very high levels of IQ you might find a person who is brilliant at Mathematics but who is only slightly above average with regard to verbal or spatial intelligence. In other words, their intelligence is extremely lop-sided. However, their overall IQ score still comes out as very impressive because their Mathematical score is astronomically high. Indeed, with such people, you will often find that they are fantastically good at Mathematics but below average when it comes to weakly *g*-loaded specialized abilities at the base of the intelligence pyramid. These, of course, are skills which people even of somewhat below average IQ tend to have no problem with. As Bowden put it in "Credo:" "Inequality is the truth, because nature is unjust, but also fair in its injustice, because there's always a balance. People who are very gifted in one area will have grotesque weaknesses in another."[46]

This phenomenon—known as Spearman's "Law of Diminishing Returns"—is portrayed in the physicist Sheldon Cooper, a character in the American sitcom, *The Big Bang Theory.* He is extraordinarily good at Mathematics and has a stratospheric IQ. However, he is socially clumsy, relies on his colleague Leonard to drive him around due to his refusal to drive, and, in general, has incredible trouble with everyday tasks that would be no problem to the "average" person, embodied, to some extent, in his neighbour Penny. Sometimes, this is caused by events that are usually negative leading, due to unlikely but possible interactions, to positive outcomes in terms of brain development. This is true of people who are born prematurely. On average, they are un-athletic, yet one of the fastest

women ever was premature. On average they are socioeconomically unsuccessful, yet some of the most eminent people in history are preemies and they are over-represented among acknowledged geniuses.[47] Similarly, left-handedness predicts slightly lower average IQ but is over-represented among people with very high IQ.[48] This is presumably because some sorts of brain damage or other atypical brain development, which also result in developmental instability and so left-handedness, can elevate intelligence. In general, though, they will reduce it. "Developmental instability" refers to an organism developing sub-optimally for environmental or genetic reasons. The genius seems to be of this kind; his intelligence is skewed, he is likely to be incompetent in everyday life. To some extent, such people will need to be managed by others in order to reach their genius potential.

Genius, Sexuality and Group Selection

Post also presents evidence that even genius sexuality is unusual. Of his sample of famous men, Post found that 73 per cent of scientists, 65 per cent of composers, 63 per cent of politicians, 44 per cent of thinkers, 41 per cent of artists and just 36 per cent of writers had what Post describes as a "normal" sexual orientation, meaning they were in a committed heterosexual relationship. He found, for example, that 33 per cent of artists had "numerous partners" while 30 per cent of writers had "psycho-sexual problems." Autism, it is worth noting, predicts the development of paraphilia. This is because autism is associated with hyper-sexuality (it reflects a strongly male-type brain and so high testosterone), an interest in objects, obsessions, intense feelings and thus an ease of making sexual associations.[49] Paraphilia (sexual fetishes) is also elevated among those with psychopathic personality,[50] and we have seen that there are elevated levels of psychopathic traits among Post's sample. Psychopathic traits are associated with paraphilia possibly because of the way in which psychopaths are highly interested in power and control, causing them to be aroused by voyeurism and sadism, in the case of males.[51] However, it may simply be that psychopathic personality and paraphilia are both expressions of developmental instability.

In addition, many scientific geniuses are asexual and neither marry nor have children;[52] Isaac Newton being an obvious example. According to Post's sample, 29.2 per cent of eminent artists from history never married.

Until the breakdown of marriage in the second half of the twentieth century, the percentage of people who never married has fluctuated throughout European history, between about 10 per cent and 20 per cent, with the lower figure being the norm.[53] Using this lower figure all of Post's samples (with the exception of the famous scientists) are less likely to be married than the average person of their time.

It has been argued that geniuses are "group-selected," as alluded to earlier. You can pass on your genes directly by having children but you can also pass them on indirectly, by investing in your kin (nephews and nieces share 25 per cent of your genes), investing in or even dying for your ethnic group when it is in battle with another (two random Englishmen are more genetically similar to each other than a random Englishman and a random Frenchman)[54] and, also via, genius: via creating a weapon which allows your group to defeat rival groups or via inspiring the group to be more ethnocentric via your charisma and religious and nationalistic fervour. This is likely why geniuses, who are often highly anti-social people, survive. They are group-selected and the successful group will have an optimum low number of them, with their manifesting via unlikely genetic combinations or via rare environmental insults that lead to brain damage and, hence, just the right psychological profile, such as severe prematurity.[55]

As Bowden piquantly summarized, with regard to geniuses in his 2009 interview *Why I Am Not a Liberal*: "Genius like that is against the grain, is largely hated while it's alive, by many people, but revered after it's gone. These people are extraordinarily difficult for others to get a handle on while they actually exist. They're freaks of nature, sort of 'special needs' the other way around."[56] The number of them must be low precisely because they are so close to psychopaths, madmen and useless dreamers and a successful society cannot afford too many of those. In addition, a society with too many geniuses wouldn't be cooperative enough to function.

What Kind of People Join the Far Right?

But Bowden wasn't just a charismatic; he was a charismatic on the "far right." This raises the question of what kind of people become involved in the far right and the extent to which Bowden is congruous with these types. We might predict that there would be approximately five kinds of people who would be attracted to the far right in contemporary Britain, that is to

say, in a culturally left-wing context:

(1) Those who are extremely ethnocentric (associated with being pro-social and mentally and physically healthy) to an extent that this overrides other considerations and even causes them to risk ostracism much as fundamentalist Christians might do. Under the harsh Darwinian conditions prevalent until the Industrial Revolution, in which child mortality was 50 per cent, we were selecting for a fitness factor which included being religious, being conservative, being ethnocentric, being mentally healthy and being physically healthy. In this context, being conservative means to be equally concerned with all five of the moral foundations which we discussed earlier. We selected for religiousness because it makes people pro-social (God is telling you to be pro-social), it reduces anxiety and despair and because it renders that which was adaptive the will of God and group-oriented, ethnocentric societies would triumph over their rivals. Selected for concomitantly, these traits became pleiotropically related into a fitness factor.[57] As we saw earlier, deviation from conservatism is associated with poor genetic health; such deviants are, on average, mutants; products of weakened selection. There would be variance within this fit, remnant pre-Industrial population and those on the "far right" would be at the particularly group-oriented end of this variance.

(2) Those who are high in psychopathy, making them attracted to danger and to offending people, selfish, and also low in consideration of harm avoidance and equality).[58] This would make sense of some of the lack of cooperation I sometimes found in some activists whom I tried to interview, with their attitude being, "What's in it for me?" One actually wrote to me: "I'm far too busy trying to make a living . . . to get involved with interviews that don't benefit me."

(3) Those who are high in aspects of mental instability which would predict attraction to extremism and also periods of fervour,[59] as a means of remedying a sense of powerlessness or asserting a clear place in the world, as other researchers have suggested.[60] Such people might move from the far left to the far right or *vice versa*; their identity being unclear due to their constant self-doubt. In this regard, it is worth remembering that John Tyndall began his political life as a socialist, even travelling to the Soviet Union for a youth festival in 1957.[61]

(4) Combinations of lower order traits: Neuroticism is composed of

numerous sub-traits such as resentment, jealousy, anger or anxiety. If this was combined with autism, which is associated with Neuroticism, it might result in a burning hatred of change. If this was found together with instinctive ethnocentrism, we can see how the far right would be attractive. Thus, although Narcissistic Personality, which underpinned by Neuroticism, is associated with being Woke, we can imagine that Narcissism could be sometimes found together with a deep loathing of change and with high ethnocentrism, leading to a far right Narcissist. This, along with high psychopathy, would help to explain the tendency towards infighting that is often found among the far right. In speaking to activists for this book, for example, some have accused former colleagues of working for MI5 or for the far left, or of being barely able to write their own names.

It would also make sense of the hostility I received, albeit rarely, from some activists whom I tried to interview; people who disagreed with various theories I have presented elsewhere on the causes of Western civilizational decline. One wrote to me: "Enjoy, Dutters. Had you been other than what you were, I would have had a ton more info on Fatty. Every time some timewaster asks me about Bowden I remember more about that arsehole . . . Whatever the PROBLEM is, it's the Juden."Referring back to Point 3, whereas the far left virtue-signal, the far right purity-signal, but with regard to in-group loyalty and out-group hostility. At their extremes, this involves signalling intense disgust for Jews which they justify with the belief that absolutely everything negative about the West, without exception, is the fault of the Jews. In other words, they signal their ethnocentrism to a very pronounced degree and it is a degree of ethnocentrism that renders them, from their perspective, morally superior to others and so, one suspects, helps them to deal with Neurotic traits such as jealousy or anxiety. For such people, in-group loyalty is often more important than objective truth, just as equality and harm-avoidance are far more important than objective truth for Woke activists. As we will see, such people would have strongly disagreed with Jonathan Bowden.

(5) The far right might also be attractive to schizophrenics for a variety of reasons, including their being paranoid about the government or their having intense religious delusions, with extreme religiosity tending to be conservative. However, they may become paranoid about the far right and so be attracted to the far left. Hence, schizophrenia, a condition we will examine in detail later, is associated with general political extremism.[62] In

this regard, I gave up on one interview because the highly emotionally aloof subject, who thus had some traits associated with the condition, only wanted to talk about conspiracy theories relating to vaccinations, stressing that this was so much more important than discussing Jonathan Bowden.

(6) In that intelligence predicts social conformity, we would expect those of relatively low intelligence to be attracted to the far right, in particular if this was combined with one or more of the traits outlined above. A study of the relationship between childhood intelligence and voting patterns in Britain's 2001 General Election among the cohort born in 1970 is consistent with this. BNP voters had the lowest average IQ, at 98.4.[63] Conservative voters had an IQ of 103.7, Labour voters were 103 and Liberal Democrat and Green voters were 108.[64]

We saw earlier that the scientific genius combines outlier high intelligence with psychopathic and autistic traits and that a group with an optimal low number of geniuses will triumph over competing groups. These traits are negatively associated with health. So, in a sense, an optimum low level of people with poor health must be sustained by a society that produces optimum levels of genius and it has been found that those born prematurely, who tend to have health problems due to brain damage and other insults, are over-represented among scientific geniuses.[65]

Such a system would produce, therefore, other people, of poor mental and physical health—such as autistics, psychopaths and Narcissists—where the psychology would be slightly different from that of scientific geniuses. They could be group-selected as artists, priests and others than inspire the group to be group-oriented. Bowden would seem to be of this kind.

A Bowden Hit Piece?

As this biography will show, Jonathan Bowden reflected many of the traits associated with the highly eminent writer or artist and, in doing so, seemingly reflected psychopathy, autism, PTSD or BPD and Narcissism. Most obviously, as we will see, he was a fantasist. Some people see these assertions as a "Bowden hit piece," as was averred in the online chat when I interviewed one of Bowden's friends, Adrian Davies, about Bowden and he gave a frank assessment. I would respond that, firstly, surely it is vital for any biography to be accurate and, secondly, such flaws are inherent in the charismatic genius, as I have shown in my book on Winston Churchill

(1874–1965), who is, many would suggest, an example of such a genius.[66] Post's analysis of 291 geniuses found that 14 per cent of thinkers, 27 per cent of artists and 40 per cent of writers had Cluster B Personality Disorders, such as Narcissistic Personality and Borderline Personality, with many others displaying some of the related traits.[67] Fabrication is a component of these disorders.[68] In a sense, you cannot have one without the other: both the spell-binding oratory and the deception are reflections of the same underlying psychological factors. Due to these factors, Bowden has become famous since his death, not unlike a certain carpenter's son from Galilee, and, as Adrian Davies quipped to me, there is "the Bowden of History and the Bowden of Faith."[69]

I hope it is clear that the purpose of this book is to understand Jonathan Bowden—both the Bowden of History and the Bowden of Faith—and, in so doing, to present, as far as possible, an accurate portrayal of his life. He was a charismatic, and so we should expect to find a complicated and flawed man. Indeed, we should be profoundly shocked if this wasn't the case.

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Chapter Four

A Child is Hidden and Wants to Play

"In every real man a child is hidden and wants to play."

F. W. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*.

Who Was Bowden's Father?

Nietzsche wrote that in "every real man a child is hidden and wants to play."[1] Bowden certainly had some beautiful surroundings in which to play. Jonathan David Anthony Bowden was born at Pembury Maternity Hospital in Tunbridge Wells in Kent on 12th April 1962, the son of Anthony John Bowden (1932–2012). The family were living in Bearsted, in the same county.[2] An extremely picturesque village, its thirteenth century church is a Grade I listed building. The village's "Old Bakery" was built in the fifteenth century while its pub, The White Horse, was constructed in the sixteenth century.

At the time, Bowden's father, known as Tony, was working for the National Provincial Bank (in 1970 this merged with the Westminster Bank to become the National Westminster Bank; NatWest) in Maidstone, a position he took up in 1959.[3] However, even in 1961, in a letter to *The Sunday Mirror,* Tony gave his address as "Broad Street, Wokingham."[4] It was specifically 34 Broad Street, a one bedroom terraced house, implying that Tony owned a number of properties and rented them out.[5] This was the same road as the Wokingham branch of the NatWest of which Tony was later manager.[6] Certainly, they lived in Bearsted long enough for Bowden to remember an upper-middle class "mad woman or witch" who lived nearby. She would behave in an anti-social manner, shouting at passers-by, until the police were called and then she would flirt with the officers. "My mother was terrified of her," Bowden remembered.[7] The family subsequently moved to the village of Peppard near Henley-on-Thames in Oxfordshire.

Tony Bowden was born in Keynsham in Somerset in 1932; a small town which is now a suburb of Bristol, an industrial port city in the southwest of

England. He had a sister, Jill Bowden (1935–2016) who is thanked, under her married name of Jill Wadley, in one of Jonathan's books for providing him with a Bowden coat of arms which Jonathan chose to publish at the front of a collection of his short stories.[8] As we will see below, I can find no evidence that Bowden was descended from a gentry family who would have had the right to use this coat of arms. Indeed, the family's surname originally was not even Bowden. Tony was a bank manager who worked, during a career beginning in 1948, in many different counties including Gloucestershire, Kent, West Sussex and Berkshire.[9] By 1970, he was assistant manager of the NatWest in Reading Market Place,[10] and, in 1975, he was appointed the manager of the NatWest in Wokingham.[11] He took early retirement in 1989. Tony was also a writer, having published about 90 short stories,[12] and numerous match reports on Wokingham Cricket Club and on Peppard Football Club in *The Wokingham Times* and *The Reading Post*.[13]

An avid cricket fan, Tony became fascinated by the sport when his father, William Ewart Bowden (1903–1973), took him to watch Somerset play at Bath in 1938.[14] Such was his passion for cricket that between 1984 and 1991 he was chairman of Wokingham Cricket Club.[15] From 1990, he was on the board of Berkshire County Cricket Club, acting as its press officer;[16] writing a book on the history of the club in 1995.[17] Keen on football, Tony trained as a referee when he left school and refereed in minor Bristol leagues until moving to Kent in 1959, also founding Hengrove Football Club and acting as its treasurer.[18] Tony was additionally a shareholder in Bristol Rovers. According to Nigel Duncan (who was the president of Wokingham Cricket Club in 2012), Tony Bowden "was a very popular member here for many years and a perfect gentleman." When he died of pneumonia on 18th August 2012, five months after his son passed away, there was a substantial obituary in *The Reading Post*.[19]

Tracing Bowden's Ancestry

Tony's paternal grandfather, Archelaus Charles Bowden, born Artie Charles *Bawden* (1872–1938) of the Brislington area of Keynsham, according to the 1911 census, was the warehouseman for a boot trader. Tony's maternal grandfather also worked for a boot trader. This is presumably how his

father, known as Bill, met his mother Marian "Margot" Evelyn Wiltshire (1907–1989). Artie, according to the censuses, was the son of a mason called Charles Bawden (1846–1920) who was in turn the son of Hercules Bawden (1807–1859), who was a railway office clerk in 1851, himself the son of William Bawden (1779–1849), a gentleman farmer of Westonzoyland in Somerset.[20] William was the son of a Robert Bawden (1756–1835) of Woolavington in the same county. He was a yeoman; a wealthy farmer below the rank of gentleman.[21] His father was Robert Bawden of Woolavington (1713–1764). This Robert's father, also from Woolavington, was another Hercules Bowden (d. 1742), a name which ran in the family, a yeoman.[22] Westonzoyland was the site of the Battle of Sedgemoor in 1685, the final battle of Monmouth's Rebellion in which James Scott, the Duke of Monmouth (1649–1685), illegitimate son of Charles II (1630–1685), was defeated by the forces of the King, his Catholic uncle James II.[23]

Before this, we are confronted with the Commonwealth Gap where the records are incomplete, so there is no baptism record for Hercules Bawden. "Hercules" may seem an odd name but there was, during this period, a minor fashion of naming children after characters from Classical myth.[24] Even though we cannot find Hercules' baptism record, it is clear that the Bawden family were in this area of Somerset all the way back to the sixteenth century and were yeomen or husbandmen (a slightly less well-off farmer, more likely to take to the plough himself), according to records in the National Archive and in the Somerset Archive. For example, a Robert Bawden alias Eagworthy of Woolavington (c. 1580–1658), who may have been illegitimate (as implied by the alias), left a will, proved at the Prerogative Court at Canterbury, referring to his son Robert, also a husbandman,[25] who is likely the father of Hercules. Clearly, this is not an especially fascinating family history; hardly worthy of having Jonathan Bowden on the television program *Who Do You Think You Are?* But insomuch as, until the Industrial Revolution, there was a strong positive association between wealth and completed fertility,[26] most English people are descended from the "middling sort" of yeomen and husbandmen when they get back to the seventeenth century. The surname Bawden is a patronym; a corruption of the Norman Christian name Baldwin.[27]

Tony Bowden's Relationship with His Son

William Bowden, Jonathan's grandfather, died suddenly at home in Keynsham of a heart attack on 1st November 1973.[28] In 1938, according to his father's administration, William Bowden was a printer's cutter, but he must have been relatively well-to-do, as he was able to send Tony to the independent Queen Elizabeth's Hospital school in Bristol, which had been established in 1586.[29] Indeed, by the time of the 1939 Register (a census taken on 29th September in order to produce wartime identification cards and orchestrate rationing), he was the foreman of the printers and by the time Tony married his father's profession was simply "Printer." Jonathan referred to his father, in a question and answer session after his 2009 speech on Punch and Judy,[30] as a "posh bank manager" who voted for Margaret Thatcher (1925–2013) only reluctantly, because he thought she was too "cruel."

Tony Bowden was certainly conservative, writing a piece in his local newspaper blaming the Attlee government's failure to survey all the roads for 1990s congestion in Wokingham.[31] Tony Bowden frequently complained about transport in Wokingham to his local newspaper, such as about the state of the railway station.[32] According to nationalist activist and carer Mick Brooks (b. c. 1966), Bowden's father would ask why his son couldn't "keep his head down" with regard to his dissident political views, to which Jonathan responded, "It's not who I am."[33] His father, of course, was the model of conservative respectability: a local celebrity who was frequently in the regional press; "a well-known local figure"[34] due to his devoted civic participation: President of Wokingham Cricket Club,[35] with the "Tony Bowden Trophy" awarded to the winning team in the local cricket league,[36] Treasurer of the Reading Association of Somerset Folk,[37] chairman of Wokingham Businessmen's Association, a member of Wokingham Chamber of Commerce,[38] on the executive committee of Peppard Football Club, member of the Lords Taveners,[39] and frequent opinion writer for local newspapers.[40]

Michael Woodbridge (b. 1945) is a retired Art teacher who trained at Trent Park College of Education, in those days part of the University of London. He is a former BNP activist, and Bowden's best friend to whom Bowden

bequeathed all of his belongings. Woodbridge recalled that Bowden was a brilliant impressionist, including of his father. Former BNP Scottish Parliamentary candidate Matt Tait (b. 1985), who was asked to stand due to his Scottish surname, despite living in England and having studied at the University of Surrey, related that Bowden would "impersonate his dad as a middle of the road milquetoast conservative. He was very entertaining." In October 2008, in a speech in North Wales, Bowden remarked light-heartedly of his father:

> My father said to me a couple of years ago, "I've done something really extreme." I said, "Cut me out of the will? What have you done?" He said, "I voted for UKIP! UKIP!" I was "Eh." But then I thought that for somebody who's only ever voted Tory that's a radical gesture, because you might vote somebody else after that. It's only one step beyond. One step beyond to terror. One step beyond that demonic line, but once you you've crossed it there's a sense that you've sort of got to the edge of the zebra crossing, and there's a truck coming, and you feel as though you can't cross yet.[41]

UKIP refers to the UK Independence Party, an anti-EU party whose success in taking votes from the Conservatives is thought to have been instrumental in pressuring Prime Minister David Cameron (b. 1966) to call the referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union in 2016 which did not go as he predicted it would.[42]

Tony Bowden doesn't appear to have been especially proud of his son's political activities; to the extent that he never spoke about him to certain friends. When I contacted Wokingham Cricket Club in search of information, the president, Martin Wilson told me: "I knew Tony as he was Club President when I joined back in 1996." When I informed him about Jonathan Bowden he replied, "Interesting. I'd never heard that Tony had a son, nor did anyone mention such activist activity in passing. If he did have such a son, he certainly never visited the cricket club in my time." Bowden told his friend Eric Galati, a New York actor who trained at the Italian Academy of Dramatic Arts, that when he was mentioned in the media in connection to the BNP "his father and family were bothered upon hearing this news." In Tony's later years, Michael Woodbridge would drive Bowden to Market Harborough in Leicestershire where Bowden's father lived and Bowden's father would take them both out for lunch. Bowden also told Galati that "he visited his father every Thursday morning and that on those occasions they always had a big English breakfast together." This seems most unlikely considering the distance they lived from each other combined

with the fact that Bowden didn't have a car, never having learnt to drive.

Bowden's Mother: Never Ask a Woman Her Age!

On 3rd April 1954, Tony Bowden married his first wife, Jonathan's mother, Dorothy Clay at St Mary's Church, Moston, in Manchester. She stated that her profession was typist. It is unclear how the couple met, because her address was in Moston and his was in the Knowle area of Bristol.

They moved to Knowle after they married and, in December 1954, Dorothy and her husband saved a family home from destruction. A fire broke out at 3 Imperial Road on the evening of Friday 10th December 1954. Living at Number 1, Dorothy heard crackling from next door and saw smoke billowing out of the chimney in her living room. She went to tell Tony, who was having a bath upstairs, and he got dressed and went into the neighbouring house. It was full of smoke and the living room was "like an inferno. Nothing could have lived in there. I shouted 'Is anyone at home?' several times. When I got no answer I feared they must be trapped." He went to another neighbour, who had a telephone,[43] and called the fire brigade and, until they came, organised for neighbours to carry buckets of water into the house. The family were out for the evening, but their tabby kitten suffocated in the living room.[44]

Tracing Dorothy's background has been extremely complicated. To the extent that Bowden's anti-social traits (of the sort that lead to creativity when associated with optimally high intelligence) are genetic, it seems to be from Dorothy's maternal line that they derive. According to her death certificate, Dorothy was born on 21st August 1931. When Jonathan Bowden dedicated a book to his mother, he would write: "Dedicated to Dorothy Bowden (1931–1978)." Dorothy's birth cannot be found in the English birth records under that name in or even close to that year. This is potentially consistent with Bowden having told a friend that his ancestry included "Irish and Mancunian."[45] Dorothy also stated on her wedding certificate that she was 21; meaning that she was born in 1932 or 1933.

Bowden's friend, former British National Party National Elections Officer Eddy Butler (b. 1962), was helpful in trying to work out what was going on with Dorothy. As an aside, Butler was initially a member of the National Front. He joined the BNP, and he was the party's organiser in Tower Hamlets in the East End of London in 1992. There, he ran the "Rights for

Whites" campaign and succeeded in getting an out-of-work lorry driver called Derek Beackon (b. 1946) elected for Millwall Ward in a 1993 local by-election. This result was scandalous at the time, it being the BNP's first ever electoral success, back when it was an overtly racially-focused party. Beacon lost the seat in the local elections eight months later.[46] Now a security guard, though formerly working for the Corporation of London, Butler, who was privately educated at Whitgift School in Croydon[47] before reading History and Politics at Queen Mary College, London, recalled that Bowden's mother might have been Irish, meaning her birth wouldn't appear in the English records. Martin Summers (b. 1967), who knew Bowden between about 1989 and 1991, also remembered Bowden saying that "his mother was Irish." In his speech "Leon Degrelle and the Real Tintin"[48] on 13th June 2009, Bowden stated that: "One of my grandfathers was in the Ulster Volunteer Force at the beginning of the twentieth century, but I went to a Catholic school." The original Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) was founded in 1913 as a Protestant paramilitary group to fight to keep the province British and Protestant-run. It was re-founded in 1966.[49]

However, Bowden was clear that his mother was from the Moston area of Manchester, and in a speech in Tangmere in West Sussex in September 2007 he stated that she was born in Moston itself.[50] The solution is found by consulting the 1939 Register. We find a Dorothy Birkett, a school girl, who was born on 21st August 1929; Dorothy Bowden's apparent birthday, according to her death certificate, but the wrong year. She was living with William Edward Taylor (1909–1967), a government rating clerk, his wife, Vera, and another person who was still alive when the register was published and is thus blacked out. It seems probable that Dorothy had been evacuated from Manchester to Blackpool, with evacuations having begun as soon as Germany invaded Poland on 1st September 1939. The National Health Service later used this register for administrative purposes. They have struck out "Birkett," and written above it "Clay" and "Bowden;" adding the dates "7/5/54" and "25/2/60." It is unclear what these dates refer to but they may reflect NHS administration, such as a change of General Practitioner.

A "Dorothy Bertha Birkett" was born, illegitimately and thus with no father named on the birth certificate, to Annie Birkett (1906–1986) at

Burtons Farm, Saltersford, in Rainow in Cheshire on 21st August 1929. Annie gave her address as 1 Cheetham View, Collyhurst Road, Manchester, which was her parents' address in 1921. Dorothy was christened at the parish church at Rainow on 8th September 1929 and the birth was registered on 8th October 1929. At the time, the stigma of illegitimacy was such that many unwed mothers would be sent away to Mother and Baby Homes before their illicit pregnancies could be noticed by the community. In some cases, mother and child were eventually welcomed back into the family home, possibly with the child raised as though it was its grandmother's child,[51] while, in others, the child was adopted. Sometimes they were sent away to private households which continuously had a number of unwed mothers living there, as was probably the case with Burtons Farm which was home, in 1921, to a young dairy farmer and his family. Many pregnant girls fled to these homes because their pregnancies were noticed by the community. They could no longer stand all of the gossip, nasty remarks, and staring. Such girls wished to be alone when making their decision about their baby's future and would return home when they felt more confident.[52] Bowden once remarked to Michael Lester (b. 1965), a property developer and the BNP's Northwest Regional Organiser, that his mother was not only from Manchester but also from Cheshire, implying that he knew that she was born in Rainow.

Annie Birkett was born in Pendleton in Lancashire and by 1911 she was living in the Moston area of Manchester. She was the daughter of Arthur Birkett (1872–1930), a foreman in a railway company who was originally from Salford. She had three brothers, one of whom, Arthur, was heavily in debt in 1926.[53] She also had two sisters, one of whom was called Bertha, explaining Dorothy's middle name. By 1921, Annie was working as an assistant machinist. Annie married Joseph Clay (1901–1997), a metal turner, in 1933 in northern Manchester, which includes Moston, with Dorothy presumably taking this surname sometime after 1939. The couple had a daughter, Joan Lillian Clay (1934–2019), in 1934 who *was* living with them in Kinver Road, Moston, in 1939, but she was only five and so possibly considered to be too young to be evacuated.[54] They also had a son, David Clay (1944-2020), in 1944. Clearly, then, Dorothy lied about her age, both to Jonathan and on official documents, presumably because it was so socially unacceptable, at the time, for a man to marry an older woman, even

if only by three years.[55]

Joseph Clay was born in Manchester, according to the 1911 census, and was definitely not Dorothy's biological father. In a short biographical section in his book *Axe,* Bowden wrote of "my mother's father—in truth her step-father, because she was illegitimate. Joe Clay . . ."[56] Also, in his 2009 speech "The Totalitarian Politics of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*," Bowden explained how his "mother's step-father" was a Communist shop steward in the Manchester factory that built the Lancaster bomber.[57] Dorothy stated on her wedding certificate that her father was Joseph Clay, but if she was adopted then legally-speaking this would have been true. This being so, perhaps Dorothy's biological father was an Ulsterman.

Bowden wrote many articles, including reviews of his own books for the website Counter-Currents,[58] and also books themselves, under the pseudonym "John Michael McCloughlin"[59] and also wrote a dust jacket quote for one of his own books under this pseudonym:

> Jonathan Bowden has often been regarded as a shadowy figure in the intellectual firmament—a creator who takes further points made by Robinson Jeffers,[60] Bill Hopkins, Ernst Jünger, and (above all) Friedrich Nietzsche. He's certainly been the author of a number of strange novels which combine Gothic phantasms with elitist philosophy. Surely the implications of his work can no longer be ignored?[61]

Could this have been Dorothy's father? There is nobody of that name on the 1939 Register, so perhaps Bowden simply concocted a Northern Irish grandfather or his mother lied to him about it, just as she lied to him about when she was born, or maybe this man had returned to Ireland by 1939. The 1939 Register for Northern Ireland cannot be checked, for security reasons. Consistent with this latter possibility, the 1921 census reveals a John McCloughlin (b. 1906) living in York Road, Wallasey, near Birkenhead. He was a junior clerk to Elder, Dempsher and Company, ship owners, and he was living with his parents, three brothers and a sister. He was the same age as Annie Birkett and he was born in Belfast, though Birkenhead is almost 40 miles from Manchester, implying that McCloughlin may have moved to Manchester after 1921. The Ulster Volunteers were gradually absorbed into the Royal Ulster Constabulary from about 1922, when he was only sixteen, though it never formally disbanded.[62] So it is possible that he may have been involved in some way or that it was Bowden's great-grandfather who was involved.

It is probable, then, that John McCloughlin was Dorothy's biological father, she knew this and she imparted this information to her son. Maybe for a period of time at least, Joseph Clay was not prepared to look after his wife's illegitimate daughter, so she was fostered out to a middle class family who would have received a weekly payment for this service from the local council. According to Bowden's account in *Axe,* Joe Clay wasn't a very pleasant chap. He "was a ferocious man. He was a man of savage and unpredictable mien, a man who was at war with the world and himself."[63] He kept a picture of Stalin on the pantry wall and, although punctual, tidy and diligent, was motivated by a hatred which could "be turned on and off at will." Hatred was his "source of animal energy . . . to live harder, faster and with great strength." Bowden recollected that: "I asked him once, what is the most important thing in your own life, he said, "HATE.'"[64] Maybe Dorothy was placed in foster care because her mother and step-father couldn't afford to look after two children, with Dorothy's half-sister born in 1934. Not surprisingly, this treatment would often produce "emotionally fragile children" who felt "displaced and alienated."[65] However, it seems more likely that Dorothy was simply evacuated.

Only once I had discovered all this did I speak to Bowden's friend William Lee, this being a pseudonym in order to protect his business interests. Lee got to know Bowden in around 1996 through people who had been involved in the Monday Club. Lee told me that Bowden had given him an account of his life according to which "his mother was illegitimate" and was the "daughter of a domestic, a charwoman who charred for an academic at Manchester University." Bowden "hinted that he may have been her father." In that Bowden told so many others of his "Ulster Scots" connection, even mentioning it on his application to join the Monday Club's Executive Committee, this may simply have been an impulsive fib.

Dorothy Bowden's Mental Health

Bowden's mother suffered from serious mental health problems. Bowden himself recalled that she appeared to a have a split personality. In *Why I Am Not a Liberal* he stated:

> I'm very direct for a southerner. I come straight out with it, which is slightly odd. And maybe it's my mother, because my mother had two personalities. People would ring up, and she'd say, "Dorothy Bowden. Henley, 4132." And then she'd say, "Get up! Get down here now!" "Dorothy Bowden, 4162 [*sic.*]." So, she had these two sorts of personalities . . . my mother died

when I was 16, and was insane before she died.[66]

Bowden relayed to his American friend Eric Galati that, "I went through every experience with my mother that you could think of; except anything sexual," strongly implying that she was seriously disturbed. He also told Galati that his mother would just "suddenly go mad" and that she once set the curtains on fire. William Lee did not recollect Bowden discussing his mother being mentally ill but, rather, seriously physically ill: "Bowden took to nursing her, including intimate care. His father didn't take to the nursing. He never presented his father in high regard."

Bowden's some time boss in the British National Party Nick Griffin, a public school-educated Cambridge University History graduate who went straight into National Front activism before taking over the BNP,[67] had heard that Dorothy suffered from mental health problems. Michael Woodbridge recalled Bowden telling him that his mother had "lost her marbles" by the time she'd died, while Eddy Butler remembered driving Bowden past some old labourers' cottages in Peppard. At one point, Bowden pointed and remarked that his mother had "committed suicide" in one particular cottage. In reality, the Bowden family didn't live in an old cottage but rather in a large bungalow on Peppard Common called "Beaufoys."

The assertion by Jonathan Bowden that his mother had committed suicide was also completely untrue. As we will explore in more detail later, Alex Kurtagic began researching Bowden's biography in 2012, interviewed a number of people that I have and then seemingly gave up on the project. Kurtagic told me in 2019 that Bowden's mother had died of "cardiac arrest;" information he had presumably obtained from Bowden and, as we will see later, Bowden also didn't mention suicide to his school friend Damian Thompson (b. 1962), now associate editor of *The Spectator*, when referring to his mother's death. According to her death certificate, Bowden's mother died at Battle Hospital in Reading on 24th March 1978. The cause of death was a heart attack and the secondary causes were Malabsorption Syndrome (meaning the body can't effectively absorb nutrients) and Adult Coeliac Disease (an inflammatory response to gluten). Coeliac disease is associated with a significantly increased risk of a heart attack.[68] Coeliac disease is also correlated with developing paranoid schizophrenia. In addition, it makes patients less able to absorb the anti-psychotics employed

to treat paranoid schizophrenia.[69]

If Bowden's accounts are to be believed, Dorothy seemed to evidence markers of intense anxiety and paranoia. Eric Galati corresponded with Bowden's cousin Adrian Wadley (b. 1962) in 2012. "Wadley did tell me that Bowden's mother was indeed mentally ill and this ran in her family. Jonathan once said in conversation that if at the time there had been a drug then maybe her cerebral state would've been altered for the better." Galati also told me that Wadley had been told by his mother that Dorothy had paranoid schizophrenia. As we will explore later, Bowden also died of a heart attack, at roughly the same age that his mother did, and Bowden suffered from paranoid schizophrenia.

Kurtagic made the following observation of Bowden's eating habits relating to when he met him in 2009:

> At the buffet, Jonathan grabbed a tiny dessert dish, onto which he placed a few items. Maybe a potato and a leaf of salad. This was repeated at breakfast the following morning, and again the day following. I remember that when we met in July, he had not eaten either, even after his driver and I, by then both starving for hours, ordered our dinners. After witnessing this four times, I had to ask: "did he ever eat?" Bowden answered that he was trying to avoid putting on weight.[70]

When Bowden came to speak at BNP meetings in the northwest, Michael Lester, who won an award in 2003 for being the best BNP activist of the year,[71] would meet Bowden at Manchester Piccadilly railway station and take him for dinner, usually at a pub with a carvery. Lester had no memory of Bowden over-indulging. It may be that Bowden, like his mother, had Coeliac Disease, as would be implied by a sudden change in eating habits. But, then again, this was not mentioned on Bowden's death certificate. Michael Woodbridge wondered if such a change in eating habits might simply reflect the way in which "Jonathan was sometimes obsessed with death, which I put down to occasional bouts of morbid imagination." Kurtagic himself remembered that, "Jonathan . . . had a horrified obsession with extreme obesity . . ."[72]

Bowden was known for liking his food, something which, combined with two factors, might help us to understand his premature death: (1) The same weak heart that caused his paternal grandfather to suddenly die of a heart attack, and (2) The heart-damaging medication he was taking for paranoid schizophrenia, which we will explore below. Bowden was remembered, by Michael Woodbridge, in his April 2012 London Forum speech "Jonathan

Bowden: A Memorial," as having had a "hearty appetite."[73] (We will explore the genesis of the London and New Right Forums in detail below). Damian Thompson, who remained friends with him until the early 1990s, recalled Bowden's appetite: "Drinking wasn't his thing. I never remember him drunk, but he liked food. He really liked to stuff his face." Thompson took Bowden to his club in London and "he ate the entire cheese board." This is something he seemingly inherited from his father, who was very overweight. Bowden's friend Stead Steadman, a Royal Academy of Art-trained painter, would meet him regularly and they would walk around Soho chatting. "He had this business with food," Steadman recalled. "If we sat outside a restaurant he'd eat the leftovers off other plates!" Paul Cullivan (b. 1965), a writer who attended the London Forum, remembered being told that, "when Bowden would meet others for tea at some cafe, he would drink the provided milk in the little jugs that the others would leave behind." Bowden's death certificate reports that he died of "Left ventricle failure" and "Ischaemic Heart Disease." This form of heart disease is much increased in patients who have Coeliac Disease.[74] Anti-psychotics markedly increase the risk of a heart attack, so are very dangerous for people with heart disease.[75]

Bowden's Childhood: Peppard, Oxfordshire

Despite Bowden's parents marrying in 1954, Bowden was not born until 1962 and they never had any other children, potentially implying that they suffered from fertility problems. It has proved difficult to discover much information about Bowden's childhood due to his being an only child and those who knew him at the time not wishing to help. His cousin Adrian Wadley, now an environmental scientist in the US, wrote to me that: "I will respect my mother's wishes and decline to discuss her nephew with you. Please also note that my mother made it clear that any of our family photos of Jonathan that may, in the past have been, or currently are, on the internet may not be used." Eventually, however, he was kind enough to correspond, but could not tell me anything I hadn't already discovered by then. Wadley's sister, Kate (b. 1967), a painter, did not respond to the message I left her Irish husband, Patrick Queally, via his Cornish veterinary practice.

It seems that Jonathan lived, as a child, mainly in Peppard, the Oxfordshire village already mentioned. According to Michael Woodbridge, Bowden attended the village primary school there, Peppard Church of

England Primary School, very close to Bowden's childhood home. The school was opened in 1871 and some of its buildings date back to its opening.[76] Peppard is about three miles from Henley-on-Thames, congruous with his mother answering the telephone such as to indicate a Henley-on-Thames dialling code, as was once the fashion. In the Chiltern Hills and known formally as Rotherfield Peppard, the village is considered so quaint and so stereotypically English that it has been used to film the popular detective series *Midsomer Murders*.[77]

When Bowden was about six, he became separated from his parents in the department store "Bobby and Co." in Folkestone. He wandered around in great distress, pleased to be away from the "constant rows" of his parents, but also deeply anxious and in tears. Eventually, he found himself in the book section in the basement where he picked up a copy of *The Man in the Iron Mask.* He couldn't get the cover image out of his head for two weeks and was fascinated by masks thereafter.[78]

Bowden's Secondary School: Presentation College, Reading

Peppard is also close to Reading, the largest town in the neighbouring county of Berkshire; a rather drab, industrial settlement with a Red Brick university. The town has a Victorian centre insulated by mid-twentieth century brutalism of various kinds, though a large number of Georgian buildings and old churches have survived, especially close to its Abbey Ruins and on Castle Hill. The comedian Ricky Gervais (b. 1961) is from Reading, as is the broadcaster Chris Tarrant (b. 1946) and the actress Kate Winslet (b. 1975).[79]

It was in Reading that Bowden attended his private secondary school, Presentation College, Reading. Established in 1931, it was a school he attended at the same time as the former editor of *The Catholic Herald* Damian Thompson, whom we met earlier, and the footballer Lawrie Sanchez (b. 1959), who scored the winning goal for Wimbledon against Liverpool in the 1988 FA Cup Final at Wembley and who also played for Northern Ireland. Bowden disclosed to Michael Woodbridge that he and Thompson were in the same class and were good friends, something to which Thompson rather bravely—considering he was writing in a kindly fashion about someone who said, in his speech "Credo," "There's nothing wrong with Fascism"—attested in his column in *The Daily Telegraph*, as

we will see later.[80] Thompson has observed that, "Being a Catholic during the first two thirds of the 20th century was rather like being Jewish."[81] Among the generation running the country in 1962 (those born between about 1900 and 1909), 55 per cent of the English population were Anglican while around five per cent were Catholic. Among those born 1980–1989, nine per cent are Anglican and about the same percentage are Catholic.[82]

Presentation College, Reading—a Roman Catholic boys' school, which was shut down in 2004—was one of a number of Presentation Colleges around the world run by the Congregation of Presentation Brothers. This lay-order—wherein "religious brothers" take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, but are neither ordained as priests nor consecrated as monks—was founded in Waterford in 1802 by the Blessed Edmund Ignatius Rice (1762–1844). As noted above, Bowden was raised Anglican, so it is unclear why he attended this particular school. Presumably, as a private school, it opened its excess places up to Non-Catholics and it was regarded as a good school. Damian Thompson recollected that, in 1973, "the Brothers were still in control, sailing down the corridors in full monastic rig." Other former pupils at Presentation College, Reading, include Michael Bond (1926–2017), who wrote the Paddington Bear books, and Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor (1932–2017), the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster. The Archbishop's father was actually instrumental in founding the school.[83]

According to Thompson, the school's status was unusual. It was a private school but because there was no other Catholic school in Reading when it was established, the Local Education Authority would pay the fees, meaning the pupils came from a much broader social range than would usually be the case at a private school, though you had to pass your 11 Plus (an IQ test to discern whether you went to the local grammar school or to the local secondary modern, which was less academic) in order to attend. There were three classes in every year and Bowden was in what Thompson referred to as the "rough class" or the "sink class" in which there were "punks." About a quarter of the pupils were non-Catholic, including Bowden. In fact, Thompson remembers them being in the newsagent W. H. Smith in Reading in late 1978 and Bowden quipping: "My parents are Methodists or something. They like helping people rather than building gold altars." As we have seen, Bowden's parents were, in reality, both Anglican. Bowden told Eric Galati that his rebellion at this school was to

insist that he was a "Prod" and to generally mock Catholic ritual, behaviour which the school tolerated.

In the same conversation with Thompson, Bowden explained that "he was part Jewish, that his father was part Jewish" and that his grandparents had been concerned that their daughter had "married a Jew boy." This seems unlikely; Tony's maternal grandmother was Mabel Annie Palmer (1882–1942), a surname that implies that her Medieval ancestor (surnames gradually became fixed during the late Middle Ages) had made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.[84] Commenting on the population of Germany, Bowden asserted, in this same conversation, that "so many of them have the blood of the Holocaust on their hands." Thompson told me that the young Bowden, "supported Israel. He was philosSemitic, he was pro-Mossad. I certainly never picked up any Anti-Semitism." Thompson added that, when he knew him, Bowden was attracted to the "far right" because he "admired its masculinity. He'd dress this up in philosophy, invoking Evola, but I don't think he was racist; that's not what motivated him." Though he perceived immigration to be a threat, "he was not a gut racist. I didn't hear him say a bad thing about the Jews, ever." Thompson was not the only acquaintance of Bowden to notice this. The initial chairman of the New Right Forum, at which Bowden delivered many of his memorable speeches, was Jonothon Boulter (b. 1981), a Birkbeck College London graduate, librarian and business consultant. Boulter remarked to me: "Regarding Jews, when in various talks a person would ask 'What about the Jews?' he would deflect and say 'What about them?' Not relevant to my talk." However, Bowden told his sometime friend Steven Taylor (b. 1958) that he was a "Neo-Imperialist" and that the British should "become like the Hebrews, to beat them at their own game."

Another friend of Bowden's in the Sixth Form, though nowhere near as close as Thompson, was Michael Smith (b. 1961), now a retired accountant. "He didn't talk about nationalism at the time," remarked Smith. "He was more into Israel. He lent me a book on Mossad. He and I found Israel quite exciting. We both saw that there was a country that was under attack from all quarters and the only way to preserve their way of life was by putting Israel first and so not following the conventional rules." Eric Galati recalled similar philoSemitism: "Jonathan was pro-Israeli. He admired them greatly, much to the chagrin of those around him."

Bowden spoke very positively of his Roman Catholic education. In his

2007 speech at the New Right Forum, "Credo" he recalled:

> I'm not a Christian and I never was, but I went to a Catholic school, and they educated me very well. And almost every book in that library was by a dead White European male. And almost everything that one learnt culturally—from the rather gory sort of Grünewald-type crucifixion as you went in, to the Dali on the wall, the reverse crucifixion scene, in reverse perspective from above, that was next to the assembly point, and to everything else—everything was European. And that's why people become Catholics. Did you notice many parents become interested when their child's about ten? And that's because they want to get them into these schools. Why do they want to get them into the schools? Because they retain the structure and the discipline. You don't leave when you're 16 and don't even know what your name is, you can't read or write, you speak like a Jamaican gangster; you have no respect for what you are and what you could become.[85]

Bowden's school, as stated above, shut down in 2004 and its successor, the independent non-denominational Christian "Elvian School," shut down in 2010, so it has not been possible to check the school records for details of Bowden's time there.

Despite eschewing Christianity, and even once referring to Catholicism as a "weak and stupid religion," at a debate at the Spinning Top Club (a club we will explore below),[86] Bowden obviously had some sympathy for the Church of Rome. Eric Galati, who came to the UK in 1992 to do a postgraduate course at the Guilford School of Acting, told me that towards the end of his life Bowden was taken by activist Jez Bedford-Turner (b. 1970) to a traditional Catholic mass, in Latin. Specifically, it was a mass in a church run by the Society of Pius X: the Holy Cross Church, Woking. The Society of Pius X opposed the Catholic Church's liberal reforms instituted after the Second Vatican Council.[87] Bowden enjoyed this mass and tried to persuade Galati to attend one in New York. Bowden was impressed by Roman Catholicism as an "authentic tradition. Everything else is gone. It's all over in the West. It's dead!" Bowden would lament. One of Bowden's favourite films was *The Passion of the Christ.* When Galati telephoned him one afternoon from New York, Bowden had just seen it. Bowden exclaimed: "This has to be the most extraordinary film I have ever seen." He "went on and on, enthusiastically, intelligently, describing all of the symbolism." A friend had remarked to Bowden, during the screening "that it just shows the cruelty of the Jews. To which Jonathan replied, 'No. Everyone can be cruel.'"

The Early Death of Bowden's Mother

Bowden's mother died on 24th March 1978, when Bowden was just 15. Galati told me that Bowden was moved by how kind and understanding the brothers at his school were after this happened. In his short story "Our Name is Legion," Bowden made "Brother Simon" the leader of a band of New England witch-hunters, presumably in honour of his headmaster Brother Simon Sullivan (d. 2010).[88] Bowden also told Galati that before this, when Jonathan was ten, Tony Bowden had walked out on him and Dorothy. This was a complete fabrication; Bowden's father never walked out on his family. At the New Right meeting on 21st November 2009, Bowden credited his mother's early death with explaining why he was not a liberal:

> The real reason is quite personal, actually, because my mother died when I was 16, and was insane before she died, and it struck me that the ways in which people would talk about this and deal with anything profound or anything tragic or anything real or that punctures through the superficial mask that people wear about things in our society now, was so trivial and materialistic and silly that I couldn't go along with it.
>
> And so, my first views, even the liberal sort, were a reaction against the tendentious propositions that liberalism enfolds: everything's material; all people are equal; all lives are equally important; tragedy is largely fictional; "grin and bear it." Do you remember the Panglossian sort of attitude that you get in Voltaire's *Candide*? You know, everything's always for the best and this sort of utterly trivial and, in one sense, irreligious attitude towards life just sort of nauseated and appalled me. I thought that there has to be something better than this.[89]

As stated above, Bowden's mother died when he was 15, nearly 16. In his speech on Nietzsche, Bowden recalled the rather macabre event that he insisted on bringing about at his own mother's funeral:

> I remember when my mother was cremated. If anyone's ever been to a cremation, there's a bit of ghastly simpering and this sort of thing, and they have a curtain because they don't want you to see the fire. Because it's a furnace, an absolute inferno.
>
> And I said to the Vicar, "Look, I'll even give you some money. I want to see the fire." And he went "Ahh, ahh, ahh. . . Pardon?" "I'm a pagan. I want to see the fire." He said, "Good lord, are you one of those?" I thought he was going to say he'd take 20 quid more. But no.
>
> And I was allowed to stand near the coffin as it went in. And it's just a blazing furnace, it opens, the sort of ecumenical and multi-dimensional curtain that they have over it, which has a peacock and various multi-faith figures on it, goes up.
>
> And you see this wall of flame. This amazing wall of flame, that's like the inside of a sun. And you see this oblong box go into it. And the flame finds every line, and every plane, and every sort of mathematical conceit in the box. And soon it's completely aflame. And then the gate comes down.
>
> And I believe that's what life's like. I believe that's what happens when a sun forms, when a galaxy forms, when one ends, when a life begins, and when a life ends. That for me is life. Fire,

energy, glory, and thinking.[90]

However, Bowden told Eric Galati that his mother wasn't cremated but, in fact, buried, and that a Catholic priest from his school conducted the funeral. This seems most unlikely, in that she wasn't Catholic. Adrian Wadley informed me that Dorothy was almost certainly cremated, as everyone else in the family was when they passed on.

Teenage Academic Promise

When Bowden was at school, pupils took two kinds of qualification. O-Levels (O standing for Ordinary) were taken at 16 in a wide-range of subjects, often between eight and ten, with English, Maths and Science being compulsory. After this, most children left school and got a job. The more academic pupils stayed on for a further two years to do their A-Levels (A standing for Advanced), usually in three subjects. In 1978, only 20 per cent of pupils stayed on to do A-Levels.[91] A vetting investigation by the Monday Club found that Bowden received the following O-Levels, with A being the highest grade obtainable: Chemistry – A, History – A, Religion – A, English Literature – A, English Language – B (at that time this would have been linguistics rather than writing short stories), Physics – B, Latin – C, Geography – C and Maths – D; meaning he failed Maths.[92] Considering Bowden's extreme perspicacity, the fact that he failed Maths is consistent with the highly skewed intelligence among genius-types which we would expect. Bowden was strongly linguistically-tilted. His failing Maths may also have reflected relatively poor spatial intelligence; this being important to trigonometry, comprehending graphs and visual patterns, and working with vectors. This deficiency may even explain, at least in part, why Bowden never learnt to drive a car. Nevertheless, these are reasonably impressive results. Bowden told William Lee that he was very proud to have done so well in Religion, better than many of his strongly religious classmates.

Bowden stayed at school to do his A-Levels. He was still at the school at the age of 18, performing in a dramatized version of *1984,* as he explained in "The Totalitarian Politics of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*."[93] Both Eric Galati and William Lee remembered that around this time, presumably in reaction to his mother's death, Bowden may have had some kind of breakdown, to the extent that he was hospitalised. However, if

Bowden did have such a breakdown it seems most unlikely that it occurred at this point. Bowden was sitting his O-Levels within months of his mother's death and he did very well in them. Not long after that, Bowden made a friend who had no memory of such a breakdown. As we will see later, it is more probable that this breakdown occurred around 1985.

Bowden's Only Close School Friend?

Bowden's best friend in the Sixth Form was Damian Thompson. He remembered that Bowden was "a strange boy" who hardly ever spoke to anyone, including the teachers. "He was surly and withdrawn." Thompson specifically recalled that when he was in the Fifth Form (aged 15 to 16) the headmaster, "Brother Simon," asked everyone to pray because Bowden's mother had died.

It was only in the Sixth Form (aged 17 to 18) and specifically in the Lower Sixth that he and Bowden became friends. Thompson was putting on a Sherlock Holmes play—written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1930) as a play—called "The Mazarin Stone."[94] Bowden approached Thompson, enquired about the play and enthused that he was "very interested in Sherlock Holmes." Thompson was surprised by this and they got talking. He was further surprised to discover that he had some key points in common with the person he had regarded as "the least appealing boy in the school." They shared a "vigorous Tory politics." Quickly, Thompson found this "strange boy" to be "very bright and amusing." Bowden espoused his own political theories, he had in-depth grasp of the news and of the failing Labour government. "I drank it in. He was so fluent, and very funny."

Not long after, Thompson was invited round Bowden's house, which was a "big bungalow." Thompson recollected that Bowden's father was the manager of the NatWest in the Reading suburb of Caversham. "He was well-spoken, a middle class gentleman; a nice normal father. I think he was glad that Jonathan had found a friend. The crowd he'd hung around with before were kind of rough." Thompson went to Bowden's house many times and was even invited to a party which his father threw for his best customers where he recalled that he got very drunk. "I liked Mr. Bowden," Thompson reminisced.

Accordingly, Jonathan was invited to Thompson's house. This was "not a success." Thompson's parents were "conventional middle class types" and Bowden, "had no manners at all. He didn't speak or, we were sitting round

the dining room table, and he picked up a fish and said, 'What's this?'" Bowden made an extremely perceptive point while they were watching the news about how if the government gave one union a particular offer then all the unions would want it. But, even so, Thompson's parents were so appalled by Bowden that they told their son not to invite him over again. "He was just rude," remarked Thompson. However, Thompson continued to go to Bowden's house.

Bowden and Thompson's Precocious Magazine

Thompson and Bowden even produced a virulently anti-Labour and pro-Tory pamphlet together, in about April 1980 while they were still in the Sixth Form, entitled, *New Right: A Magazine of a New Political Discussion Group.* This being 1980, it was produced on a type-writer and Bowden, its editor, had drawn, on the cover, a comical picture of a Labour Party member hanging himself and saying "More rope!! More rope!!" Particularly considering it was penned by two 18 year-olds, the writing is amazingly fluent and witty. The first article, a review of the 1980 Labour Party conference, the party having been ousted from power less than a year earlier, notes: "It was all delightfully bitchy. Mrs Thatcher can hardly have suppressed a smile as she watched her opponents tearing themselves to pieces in public." Recently defeated Prime Minister James Callaghan (1912–2005) is referred to as "overseer of this particular abattoir in Labour's history." Co-authoring the piece, Bowden and Thompson insist that they now have "the first truly CONSERVATIVE administration since the war."

In the next article, the Liberals are dismissed, by Bowden, as the "Be Nice to the Gays" party and "the nearest thing Britain possesses to a 'Pythonesque' Silly Party." Then Bowden printed a speech which he gave at a debate at the Ship Hotel in Reading, acknowledging that one Peter Pegnall, now a poet, had espoused the "socialist" cause. In another piece, Bowden cogently argued against state funding for the arts: ". . . it is indefensible that public money should be used to subsidise staged sodomy at the National Theatre or to purchase a pile of bricks to be exhibited at the Tate Gallery."[95] Interestingly, Bowden entitled the final article, on the Queen's visit to Morocco, "The Birkett Column." Birkett, of course, was his mother's original surname.

On the Spectrum?

In retrospect, Thompson realised that Bowden "was on the spectrum." Others also noticed evidence of this. Thompson introduced Bowden to his friend Tony Trowbridge, an Australian property developer living in the UK, at a Notting Hill restaurant in 1989. Trowbridge remarked that Bowden was, "fairly odd and not an easy mixer, but no fool." Michael Smith observed that Bowden was, "mildly obsessive. He was very funny and very good company, but he appeared not to be comfortable with the world. He had trouble relating to people and to groups of people." This became very clear at the Federation of Conservative Students' conference at Sheffield University in 1981, which they attended together (see below). "He wasn't a party animal. He seemed a bit shy, but he could become very animated when talking to you one-on-one," remarked Smith. Smith also felt that Bowden, "saw himself as an underdog . . . as an embattled figure," wondering if this helped to explain his later attraction to the far right. Stead Steadman recalled Bowden being at Steadman's father's house: "He was ill-at-ease. He didn't do small talk. He just looked at the bookshelves. He didn't seem in the mood to converse with my father." However, one-on-one Bowden loved to talk: "He'd ring up and we'd have quite a chat. He seemed to have plenty of time. If there was a silence, he could always fill it in an interesting way."

Irish engineer Kevin Mulholland (b. c. 1980) met Bowden in 2009 at the New Right Forum: "I cannot say I was impressed. He came across as socially awkward and weird. He wouldn't look you in the eye. But I didn't know who he was then. I assumed he was just an oddball nobody, that was before his cult following." By February 2009, the Jonathan Bowden Appreciation Society had been set-up on Facebook, so this following was evidently beginning. Damian Thompson explained to me that Bowden, "didn't find it easy to relate to people. He was a great talker but not a great conversationalist. He was shy. He was not good at judging others' reactions. He'd take ages to get going and then he'd go into a monologue, which would often be brilliant. He was regarded as a strange boy at school." Martin Summers, a Warwick University graduate who later worked for British American Tobacco, told me that Bowden had apparently put an advert in *The Spectator* about "revolutionary conservatism" in about 1989. Summers, a libertarian who was highly "intellectually curious," had "called him up." They would drink together at "The Two Chairmen," a Westminster

pub: “He was quite shy and nervy,” recalled Summers. “He didn’t seem comfortable in his own skin. Partly, this was because he was a little bit overweight and his suit was too tight. But he’d warm up and become good pub company . . .an interesting guy with an encyclopaedic knowledge of various kinds of fringe groups. But it’s difficult to imagine him holding court [*as he later did*]. He wasn’t very prepossessing. It doesn’t quite fit.”

Peter Rushton (b. 1966) had a similar recollection of Bowden’s monologues. Hailing from near Oldham, after studying History at Oxford, Rushton joined the BNP in about 1991. Nick Griffin expelled Rushton, who was a strong supporter of the BNP’s first leader John Tyndall, from the party in 2003, but Rushton remained active in BNP circles. With reference to Bowden, Rushton told me that, “He’d be quiet to begin with and the suddenly he’d explode into life and take on a completely different character.” “He was on the spectrum, it was impossible to have a normal conversation with him,” remarked Jack Antonio (b. c. 1950), an American actor friend of Bowden’s. “He’d talk over my shoulder while talking to me.” American philosopher Greg Johnson (b. 1971) noticed that Bowden would sometimes appear to zone-out for periods during otherwise animated conversations.[96] This is a means via which autistics deal with being over-stimulated.[97]

Thompson suspected that Bowden was also “traumatised” by the death of his mother, which had occurred not long before they became friends. “He didn’t conceal that it was incredibly painful for him.” In fact, Thompson recollected that they once walked past a room in Bowden’s house and Bowden remarked that it was in that room that his mother had been “lying dead.” This, of course, was untrue. He also sold Thompson his mother’s “Complete Works of Jane Austen” for £5 (a collection Thompson showed me on our video call), not long after his mother’s death; an odd thing to do. “He felt intense pain over the death of his mother,” Thompson added.

Eric Galati once witnessed Bowden come close to opening up about the pain of his childhood. “One evening we were at an Italian restaurant for a pizza . . . When we exited, the discussion came to a moment of reality with regards to his life when younger and he said in a true voice, sad and sombre, not fantasy, ‘I was hurt by people when I was younger.’” He also once said to Galati: “Eric, I am English and I am not allowed to express these things, but I love you. You don’t know what it means that you phoned me.”

Bowden "was a tremendous fabricator," explained Thompson. Bowden did only two A-Levels, both in sciences, with Thompson wondering whether he was pressured to do these rather incongruous subjects by his father. As we saw earlier, Bowden's O-Level results in Humanities subjects were excellent, so this may have been the case; though even his science results were very good (including an A in Chemistry) and he would have sat his O-Level exams roughly three months after his mother's death. Michael Smith, however, remembered that one of Bowden's A-Levels may have been Economics. Bowden informed Thompson that he had received, in his A-Level results; a B and an O "'BO,' he laughed." "O" meant that he had been awarded a mark equivalent to an O-Level pass. Thompson mentioned this to the head of science, Mr Jones, who told him it was nonsense. Bowden had failed both of his A-Levels.

Graham Jones (b. 1944), who attended Presentation College before reading Chemistry at Oxford and then immediately returning to teach at the school in 1968,[98] related to me that he didn't ever teach Bowden himself, and that he knew him merely as "a friendly chap," recalling "his general physiognomy. He was not very tall, and round." Damian Thompson wasn't surprised that Jones had only a dim memory of Bowden. "Jonathan didn't talk to teachers, or anyone much when we were in the Sixth Form," he related. "I was an exception because I was the only one who shared his pro-Tory and anti-Labour obsession." Thompson went to Mansfield College, Oxford, to read History. Bowden's next steps were rather less prestigious, but the pair kept in touch.

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Chapter Five

Everything is Tumult: Bowden's Youth

> In the young soul, everything is tumult, uncertainty, self-contradiction; the old soul has, on the contrary, peace, self-assurance, and the convergence of its aims.
>
> F. W. Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*.[1]

The Missing Decade

Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister making Britain stand tall again, punk, the rise of Alternative Comedy, the AIDS epidemic, the end of the Cold War, *Blackadder*, the Falklands, the Miners' Strike, Iron Maiden, *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* . . . So much happened during the 1980s and so much has changed since then. Culture has clearly become so much more left-wing. It's not very clear, however, what Bowden was doing in the 1980s.

According to the interview after his Punch and Judy speech, by the age of 19,[2] having left school, Bowden was living in Manchester, implicitly with his father: "We used to live in St. Ives Road which was next to Fallowfield down from Maine Road where Manchester City used to be . . . Oh God, what a toilet that was! It was an utter tip even then. We were there in 1981-82." Although, Bowden also implied that he was already in Manchester in 1980, when he was still 18:

"You saw scenes of poverty you'd never see in the South, never seen in my entire life. I thought to myself, "Christ." I saw one bloke. Do you remember those expressionist Communist paintings by people like Grosz and so on from the 1920s of veterans who had been wounded in war and on boards with no limbs with wheels on the bottom and that sort of thing? I saw a bloke in Gorton like that in 1980. I thought to myself, "Bloody hell! This is 1980! The Boer War ended in 1902, and there's this bloke like that!" I thought."

Bowden claimed that in 1980 he witnessed a clash on Oxford Road, near Manchester University, between Iranian supporters of the Ayatollah Khomeini (1902–1989) and those of the Mujahideen whose leader the

Ayatollah had banned from standing in the country's presidential election that year. It was at this time, so claimed Bowden in his speech on Savitri Devi on 23rd October 2010, that his father gave him some advice, which he completely ignored:

> My father was a bank manager. I came from a very ordinary bourgeois background. When I was 18 he said: "Keep your head down, son. Never get in the papers. Never do anything that will cause any trouble. Never do anything that will cause people to dislike you, and spend your entire life making money." That was the advice I was given. And I'm not demonizing him; he's a representative of thousands and thousands of other people saying exactly the same thing. And I have never believed that that's what life is about. I've never believed that that's what life is about.[3]

In reality, Bowden didn't live in Manchester at this point. He was presumably referring to where his grandparents lived and turning periods staying there into living there.

According to Damian Thompson, Bowden went to Bracknell College in 1980. This was a Sixth Form College, an institute of Further Education, which Bowden attended in order to repeat his A-Levels. The vet by the Monday Club could find no evidence that Bowden had any A-Levels, but this was because they checked with his school. Bowden never told them that he attended Bracknell College on the CV that he sent them, presumably because attendance would imply that he had needed to repeat his A-Levels. However, Bowden obtained 3 A-Levels or equivalent with excellent grades as we will see later.

Maggie's Militant Tendency: The Federation of Conservative Students

By 1980, Bowden was a member of the Conservative Party and became Bracknell College's representative at the conference of the Federation of Conservative Students, which was held at Sheffield University in 1981. Bowden stated in his book *Heat* that he was a member of this group in the 1980s.[4] The Federation of Conservative Students was militantly right-wing and so pro-Apartheid that some members wore "Hang Mandela" stickers to marches, in response to what they saw as his terrorist attacks. Even Thatcher, in 1987, dismissed Mandela's African National Congress as "a typical terrorist organization."[5] In 1986, in a House of Commons debate, it was reported that a member of the Federation of Conservative Students had written to a member of the BNP to suggest that the two groups cooperate in

disrupting the activities of left-wing students. Members also planned to disrupt the conference of the National Union of Students.[6] By 1986, this group was so embarrassing for the Conservative Party, due to its perceived right-wing extremism, that it was disbanded.[7]

Thompson travelled to the 1981 conference with William Hague (b. 1961) who was also at Oxford and was later Leader of the Conservative Party from 1997 to 2001 and Foreign Secretary from 2010 to 2014. Thompson had not seen Bowden for just a few months, but he noticed a "big leap in his intellectual development. I was very impressed by the calibre of his conversation, far better than a lot of those I had at Oxford." While they sat in a room on the university campus, Bowden explained the theory of alienation to him and held forth on the intricacies of Marxism. But at this stage Bowden was still very much a political Conservative. At a speech in Manchester in 2006, Bowden reminisced: "I had a conversation with William Hague when I was 18 and when he was 18 and he said, 'We can't do anything, you know? It's all over. They wouldn't listen to Enoch. It's gone. We need a colour-blind conservatism.' And I said to him, 'Well, you have to understand, William, that people perceive life differently because they *are* different.'"[8] Bowden likely met Hague, but it seems reasonable to suppose that the specific conversation is fictional. Hague certainly couldn't remember the conversation, telling me: "I'm afraid I don't recall anything about Jonathan Bowden, or meeting him. Sorry about that—he sounds a very interesting figure—but I must have been to literally hundreds of conferences since 1981. I do recall going to that conference, but not much else about it."

Michael Smith and Jonathan Bowden became friends at school in about 1979 because they were both Conservatives. Indeed, Smith remembers going to Bowden's house prior to them getting the train to London in order to go to the Federation of Conservative Students conference at Sheffield University, by which time Smith was studying English Literature at the University of Kent. "Margaret Thatcher had come to power after decades of socialist rule. There was a sense of excitement and novelty," he recalled. "Bowden's views were right of centre; he was influenced by Thatcher and Keith Joseph.[9] At the time, you could tell something was happening." The quotidian nature of Bowden's conservatism at the time, combined with his broad range of interests, meant that Smith was "surprised he didn't stay

within conventional conservative circles. I could have imagined him being a local councillor somewhere." Smith and Bowden lost touch around 1982.

The Local Monday Club?

Bowden claimed in his 2006 speech "Bill Hopkins and the Angry Young Men"[10] that he joined the Monday Club, a formerly influential pressure group within the Conservative Party that was strongly anti-immigration, when he was 18, so either at school or at Bracknell College.

The Monday Club was founded in 1961 in opposition to Conservative Prime Minister Harold MacMillan's (1894–1986) opposition to white minority rule in Southern Rhodesia.[11] It had branches around the country and prominent members have included Sir Teddy Taylor (1937–2017), who was Shadow Scottish Secretary, Geoffrey Ripon (1924–1997), who was Shadow Foreign Secretary, Duncan Sandys (1908–1987) who was Churchill's son-in-law and Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, Norman Tebbit (b. 1931) who was Employment Secretary, and John Bercow (b. 1963) who later became Speaker of the House of Commons and repudiated his earlier "hard right" views.[12] Bercow was president of the Federation of Conservative Students when Norman Tebbit disbanded it for being embarrassingly extreme and also due to its reputation for "drunken balls and rowdy behaviour."[13] In 2001, the Conservative Party, obsessed with modernising and appearing compassionate in order to ape the triumphant New Labour and its Spirit of the Age, formally severed any links with the Monday Club.[14] In July 2024, with declining membership, the club was wound up.

It seems unlikely that Bowden was a member of his local Monday Club when he was 18. There was no branch of the Monday Club in Berkshire, only in neighbouring Surrey,[15] and he didn't mention this membership when he applied to join the Monday Club at the national level. As we will see below, Bowden had a penchant to exaggerate. It may be that as a member of the Conservative Party he attended a few Monday Club meetings in Surrey when he was 18.

His Own Worst Biographer

Adrian Davies, a Cambridge and University College London-educated solicitor and then barrister, has represented controversial figures, including

the historian David Irving (b. 1938) and Jez Bedford-Turner. Bedford-Turner was contacted for an interview but did not reply. Davies was the chairman of the Freedom Party (a small nationalist party) while Jonathan Bowden was its treasurer. Davies remarked in his 2012 speech at the New Right Forum "The Untold Story of Jonathan Bowden"[16] that "Jonathan was one of the biggest inventors of myths about Jonathan," adding, when I spoke to him, that, "He was ultimately an unreliable narrator. He told me things that were frankly untrue and of a startling kind." This made Davies wonder what else Bowden had said which was inaccurate. Bowden mentioned to Davies, for example, that he studied Geography at Reading University. The Reading University archivist, Sharon Maxwell, told me that Bowden was never a student at Reading University.[17]

Bowden would ring Eric Galati, supposedly from the huge studio Bowden owned, and tell him, "I'm covered in blue paint because I'm painting in blue!" or "I'm taking a hot bath!" Bowden owned neither a studio nor a bath. In the front matter of his last book, *Colonel Sodom Goes to Gomorrah,* Bowden included a photograph of a bungalow under which was written "Studio."[18] In reality, this was Bowden's childhood home on Peppard Common in which he was presumably trying to imply he still lived.

Bowden gave Tony Trowbridge the impression that he had studied Engineering at Manchester University and then dropped out, eventually going to Wolfson College, Cambridge. In 1880, with a growing belief in the need for provincial higher education in an increasingly industrial economy, the federal Victoria University was established with its own degree-awarding powers. Manchester University broke away from this in 1904. Engineering was one of its key subjects.[19] In the question and answer Session after his speech on Punch and Judy,[20] Bowden remarked, "I remember when Leon Brittan came to Manchester University." Leon Brittan (1939–2015) was Home Secretary between 1983 and 1985. The protestor-riot at Manchester University Student Union, which Bowden discussed and which was against Leon Brittan's visit, was on 1st March 1985.[21] By this point, Bowden would have already dropped out of Birkbeck College, London, as we will see below. But to be at Manchester University by March 1985, he would had to have immediately gone to Manchester University upon dropping out of Birkbeck. It seems unlikely he would have

had time to apply. In addition, in a London Forum speech in 2011, Bowden asserted, "I once visited, for my sins, the National Union of Students building in Manchester on the Oxford Road."[22] Such a remark is, clearly, not consistent with having studied there.

According to the Manchester University Archivist, Dr James Peters, Bowden does not appear ever to have been an Engineering student at the university. Certainly, he took no first year exams. As we will see later, Bowden's chosen A-Levels would also have made it impossible to be accepted to do such a degree. Overall, then, it seems likely that Bowden simply lied about studying at Manchester University, just as he lied about studying at Reading University. It is probable that he grandiosely exaggerated the fact of attending some lectures at Manchester University while he was in the city staying with his grandparents. Attending lectures as a non-student would have been acceptable at the time as students did not yet have to pay tuition fees. As we will see later, Bowden certainly informally studied at another institute of higher education. Indeed, it may be that a curious Bowden went along to a few Geography lectures at Reading University, being unemployed, having nothing to do and wishing to stimulate his mind.

Clearly, when speaking to Bowden, you could not know what was true. For example, he boasted to Eric Galati that:

> he knew a woman who had got involved with a group of hard core Satanists, The Black Chalice, who would use her as a sex slave. She would be made to sometimes walk on all fours and wear chains and so forth, as well as perform heinous acts of depravity. He decided to take action and made an appointment with one of them. He gave the group an ultimatum that they were never to have anything to do with his lady friend again because he had connections to an Ulsterite organisation that he would have attack them. The Satanists feared for their lives and never bothered the woman again.

We might suggest that this likely reflects the imagination of an extremely imaginative man. However, for reasons we will explore below, there may be a grain of truth to it. Certainly, Bowden knew people who were interested in sadomasochism, as we shall see.

It appears, then, that in 1980, Bowden failed both of his A-Levels. Between 1980 and 1982, he was at Bracknell College doing completely different A-Levels, while being active in the Federation of Conservative Students. He may also have attended a few Monday Club meetings in Surrey, and attended a few left-wing meetings, possibly in London which is about an hour on the train from Reading. Bowden stated, in "Bill Hopkins

and the Angry Young Men," that: "I went to an intellectual salon—run by a Continental European, of course . . . I was about 18 . . . ."[23] In his speech on the American poet Ezra Pound (1885–1972) on 11th June 2011, Bowden revealed that he stayed in Paris for a few weeks in 1982 and went to the English language bookshop Shakespeare and Co. Bowden also claimed to have been in Paris in 1986.[24]

How Did Bowden Support Himself Financially?

Another issue about which Bowden did not tell the truth was with regard to how he supported himself financially. According to Michael Woodbridge, who first met Bowden at a New Year's Party at a house in Beaconsfield in 1998, Bowden never really worked. "He lived off his father. There was some sort of allowance from his father." Apparently, his father had got him "a menial job" in the NatWest and he "lasted about half a day" before he left. Bowden never had formal employment again. "He always allowed me to pay for everything. He once told me that he was a millionaire, but he lived hand to mouth."

Mike Newland (b. 1944), the sometime BNP Press Officer, recollected that Bowden, "was always short of money." Newland was apparently attractive to the London BNP in the early 1990s, when it had a particularly thuggish image, because he was at least educated, at the Polytechnic of the South Bank and the City of London Polytechnic, and was an accountant.[25] (We will explore the difference between universities and polytechnics anon). Syd Bowmaker would regularly dine out with Bowden, often as part of a group. "He did his utmost to avoid paying for anything," laughed Bowmaker. Bowden's sometime friend Steven Taylor recollected Bowden commissioning him to paint a portrait of him and then refusing to pay for it when it was completed. Julian Leppert (b. 1967), a postman, was the BNP's candidate for London Mayor in 2004 and was a BNP councillor on Redbridge Council in Essex between 2006 and 2010. In 2019, he was elected to Epping Forest District Council, representing For Britain, a UKIP-splinter group. This was dissolved in 2022, so he joined the British Democrats (a BNP-breakaway party), losing his seat in 2023. Leppert remarked that Bowden, "didn't seem like someone who had a lot of money. He'd always wear the same suit with the same shirt and tie. He seemed to have only one set of clothes. You'd expect someone of his intellect to be

wealthier."

The problem of being "short of money," despite claiming to be wealthy, sometimes resulted in the farcical. Paul Cullivan, who gave a talk on German philosopher Max Stirner (1806–1856) at the London Forum , recollected that:

> My own emotional feelings about Bowden seem to centre on him eating my own dinner. I went to the Victory Services Club (which was the members club that many of the London Forum lot would go to after events) and ordered a nice burger and chips. I was at a side table and Bowden and Co were sitting on sofas in the centre. After 40 minutes I wondered where my dinner had got to and so I approached the staff. An embarrassed staff member said "we gave it to him," pointing at Bowden. They had obviously offered it to his table initially and he had, no doubt, reached out his hands and said in those immortal words, "Thank you very much!"

Bowden would always end his speeches with these words. As it happens, Bowden dedicated the book, *Mad,*[26] not only to his mother but also to Max Stirner, known for his philosophy of "Egoism" and also for writing in a highly idiosyncratic fashion. In Stirner's view, the individual is the "unique one," there is nothing greater than him, and he should reject anything that claims to be greater than him as an oppressive "spook": The individual defines his own existence.[27]

Stuart Millson recalled that Bowden had some money from somewhere, his bank manager father had helped him invest it and that this generated a small income "allowing him to live frugally. But I never asked him about the source of the money." Martin Summers remembered Bowden talking about "a small inheritance," but that when it came to his sources of income Bowden was "a bit elusive." The only inheritance I can find is one of £250 when Bowden's paternal grandmother died in 1989. On a CV which Bowden sent to the Monday Club in 1991, he wrote, "I have two businesses, one of which deals with teaching—A-Level, GCSE, Oxbridge entrance, Cambridge Proficiency in English and so on . . . and another which deals with printing." Bowden had told Tony Trowbridge that he had some kind of printing business but he didn't seem to have a shop. When questioned, Bowden informed him he'd arrange the printing and take a cut. "He was very vague," added Trowbridge. Eric Galati recalled meeting Bowden and Bowden telling him that he was disappointed because, "a business deal hasn't come through." In 1991, when he was interviewed by *The Independent* as the spokesman for the Western Goals Institute, Bowden told them he was a "printer" too.[28] He also claimed to have been an

auctioneer,[29] and, in a speech in 2008, asserted, "I used to work in the City in the 1990s,"[30] which was completely untrue.

Eddy Butler first met Bowden in 1993, through Mike Newland, at a Polish restaurant in South Kensington. "He was a romancer of his own background," Butler explained to me. "He said that his family had ten interconnected businesses; that he lived with his father and had to work around them and that he couldn't break cover. As I got to know him I realised it was all fiction." Similarly, Matt Tait recalled Bowden telling him that he was "independently wealthy. He said he'd bought up a street in Oldham after the riots (in 2001) when it was cheap. That's why he didn't have a job." Bowden led Tony Trowbridge to believe that he'd invested in run down houses and flats and that he made money by letting them to people on social security. Bowden had told William Lee that he had purchased a number of properties cheaply in the wake of the Moss Side Riot in Manchester in 1981, which seems improbable as Bowden would only have been 19, retaking his A-Levels at Bracknell College. Bowden made money, so he said, by renting out the properties. He also claimed to be a dealer in outsider art. Lee recalled that Bowden certainly sold a few paintings, including one of his own to his friend David Oderberg (b. 1963), now Professor of Philosophy at Reading University. Oderberg refused to be interviewed for this book. Eric Galati remembered Bowden telling him how he had admonished a dishonest tenant on one occasion, when the tenant asked rhetorically, "You don't think I'm trying to cheat you?" to which Bowden answered, "Yes, you're trying to cheat me!"

Adrian Wadley confirmed to Eric Galati, in August 2012, that Tony Bowden supported Jonathan financially, as did Bowden's step-mother whom we will meet below. This eventually became "unbearable" and the couple "moved to a different part of England." Whatever allowance Bowden received from his father, it was seemingly relatively meagre: "He was always skint but wouldn't admit it," noted Eddy Butler. "People who were kind of subservient to him would buy him drinks. Maybe he was on the dole. He'd come round my house and he'd suddenly disappear and you'd find him upstairs having a bath! That was the kind of man he was!" Matt Tait had heard that Bowden "subsisted on a combination of benefits and money from his family." Consistent with this idea, when Tony Bowden drew up his will in 2008, he bequeathed his son just £5000. This relatively small amount would make sense if Bowden had been living off an

allowance from his father for most of his life. Bowden was only to inherit Tony's properties if Tony's second wife (see below) predeceased him or if she died within 28 days of his death. Tony's estate, independent of the properties, was not especially large, valued at around £112,000.

Who Was Bowden's Step-mother?

The year 1983, when Bowden was 21, was something of a turning-point in his life—his father re-married. We can imagine that this would have been extremely difficult for an only-child who was used to his widowed father supporting him. Tony married in August 1983 to Sylvia Mavis Maskell (b. 1943) of Waterloo Road, Crowthorne, at Finchampstead Church. According to the announcement in the local newspaper, Tony was by then living at Milton Gardens in Wokingham and the couple honeymooned in Jersey.[31] It seems that Tony moved into his wife's house, as he gave his address as Waterloo Road, Crowthorne, in a letter to *The Bristol Evening Post* in 1987.[32] Crowthorne is home both to the public school Wellington, where George Orwell (1903–1950) was briefly a pupil,[33] and to the psychiatric hospital Broadmoor. Sylvia Maskell came with sons David Maskell (b. 1964), who now lives in Texas, where he is the Financial Controller of the Texas Chiropractic College, and Chris Maskell (b. 1966), who lives in Vancouver where he is the CEO of the National Floor Covering Association of Canada. Sylvia also had a daughter, Gail Elizabeth Maskell (b. 1970), from her first marriage. Originally Sylvia Cross, she was the widow of Daniel Maskell (1937-1976) whom she had married in Surrey in 1963.[34] In 2001 Gail married Steve Prosser, who designs covers for children's books. They had a daughter, Genevieve, in Shrewsbury in 2003, who is currently studying Costume Design at Salford University, near Manchester. They had another daughter, Felicity, in Kettering, where they were living, in 2010, Tony and Sylvia moved to Market Harborough, 12 miles from Kettering, in 2007, purchasing a small bungalow there. As we saw earlier, part of the motivation to move appears to have been tensions with Jonathan over financial issues. An acquaintance went to Market Harborough for me in February 2025 to try to speak to Sylvia, as she had not replied to my letter. She has dementia and could not speak with him, her daughter did not wish to do so, and her daughter's husband had never met Jonathan, merely recalling that he had lived in sheltered accommodation in Reading. Neither

of Sylvia's sons replied to my emails.

Bowden told his friend William Lee that, at least for a time, he lived with his father, step-mother and step-sister at the house in Crowthorne, remembering hearing sirens from Broadmoor Hospital. There were tensions between Jonathan and his step-mother; unsurprising if his father was simply funding him. Michael Woodbridge drove Bowden to visit his seriously ill father, who had suffered a series of strokes, in hospital in Market Harborough in 2011. The wife and step-daughter were in the room with Tony and when Bowden arrived they simply left. "They didn't even speak. There was complete hostility." Woodbridge spoke to Bowden's step-sister when they, together, cleared out Bowden's belongings after he had died. "She seemed quite pleasant and agreeable. But the wife was completely cold." One can understand why they would have experienced difficulties with Bowden. His step-sister Gail's Facebook page includes photographs with the terms "Disinformation is Deadly" and "Stay Home. It Could Save Lives," with reference to the COVID pandemic. William Lee remembered that Bowden had "a difficult relationship with his step-mother."

Eric Galati relayed to me Bowden's fantasy about his step-family. Bowden claimed that his step-brother lived in Texas, worked for Enron and had committed suicide due to having been found to have been covertly filming women. This was nonsense. The step-brother does live in Texas but is still alive at the time of writing. According to Bowden, his step-sister, upon being told of the suicide, was "so hysterical I had to slap her until she came to her senses." Bowden claimed to have flown to Texas for the funeral in December 2001 and to have written his screenplay *Venus Flytrap,* which we will examine below, while he was on the aeroplane.

Birkbeck College, London

Birkbeck College, London, was founded in 1823 by the scientist and adult education pioneer Sir George Birkbeck (1776–1841) as the London Mechanics Institute, with the aim of allowing working people to study in the evenings. It was renamed the Birkbeck Literary and Scientific Institute in 1966, and Birkbeck College in 1907, becoming part of the University of London in 1920. Bowden informed a number of people that he attended Birkbeck College, London, around 1984, for the first year of a degree in English and History, such that this information has made it into most of his obituaries.[35] In his speech "Marxism and the Frankfurt School," Bowden

relayed that:

> I once had a conversation with E. J. Hobsbawm[36] who was the Marxist professor at Birkbeck, the extramural and evening college of London University, and he said, in private of course; 'Well as a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain I would never have admitted this, but the entire Soviet experiment has been deleterious!' You know, 20 million dead, 50 million dead, multiple wars, dictatorship? It's been 'deleterious.' As he reaches for another drink, you know. He said, 'All it achieved was the socialization of the means of production; it's not enough, it's not enough!' you know.[37]

According to Damian Thompson, Bowden told him, in 1989, that he had received a First Class degree from Cambridge and was researching a PhD on the novelist and artist Percy Wyndham Lewis (1882–1957), of whom there was a minor revival at the time,[38] at Birkbeck. Martin Summers also remembered how fascinated Bowden was by Wyndham Lewis. Percy Wyndham Lewis' artistic movement "Vorticism," a combination of Cubism and Futurism (which stressed speed and violence), appears to have influenced many of Bowden's paintings. However, Bowden was not researching a doctorate on Wyndham Lewis at Birkbeck in 1989.

When Bowden was vetted to join the Monday Club Executive Committee, they contacted the University of London Central Registry who informed them that Bowden had completed one year of a History degree at Birkbeck between 1983 and 1984.[39] This was confirmed to me by Birkbeck's alumni officer Nadine Thompson-Best. The Monday Club presumably did this because Bowden had told them, falsely, on the CV he had submitted when he stood to join their Executive Committee: "At present I am studying for a PhD at London University . . ." Presumably, Bowden would have finished re-taking his A-Levels in summer 1982, beginning at Birkbeck in autumn 1983, after taking a year out of some sort. We will look at his A-Level results below. Dropping out of university was less serious in those days as students did not have to pay tuition fees and they also received a small maintenance grant from their local council. This was well before the country's current system of mass-higher-education and universities being focused around making money, which commenced with the election of Tony Blair (b. 1953) and New Labour in 1997.[40] In 1984, when Bowden was at university, only about 15 per cent of school-leavers went into higher education, roughly half to universities and half to polytechnics.[41] By 1999, 33 per cent of pupils were going into higher education and this has only

continued to rise,[42] to 50 per cent by 2019.[43]

Did Bowden Study at the Polytechnic of North London?

William Lee recalled Bowden telling him that he had "lectured" at the Polytechnic of North London. Polytechnics no longer exist and it is worth briefly pausing to establish what they were and how they functioned, as this helps us to understand Bowden's exaggeration.

In the early nineteenth century, the government decided that there was a need for formal technical training for the middle classes, as the Industrial Revolution progressed, resulting in the opening of the Royal Polytechnic Institute in London in 1838 (now the University of Westminster). These institutions, sometimes called technical institutions, were to concentrate on applied science and vocational studies, such as engineering, architecture, pharmacology, nursing, and art, including technical drawing. Thus, to give an example, Leicester Polytechnic (now De Montfort University) began life in 1870 as the Leicester College of Art.

Polytechnics heavily expanded from about 1966, with the belief that Higher Education, including in the arts and humanities, should be available to a wider section of the population, leading to these technical colleges being recognised as polytechnics from which one could obtain degrees (rather than mere certificates). Increasingly, they began to add to their available courses the same traditional subjects that could be studied at universities, such as History or Philosophy. However, these degrees were validated and awarded by an external body—as of 1965, the Council for National and Academic Awards—whereas universities validate and award their own degrees.[44] In general, polytechnics required lower A-Level grades than did universities. However, there was a radical element to attending a polytechnic for some highly able students. They took pride in being part of a class struggle against the traditional universities that were associated with the public schools and the aristocracy. Many of the polytechnics, and especially the Polytechnic of North London, were associated with radical left-wing politics.[45]

Originally, the Northern Polytechnic Institute, the precursor of the Polytechnic of North London opened in Holloway, in the north London borough of Islington, in 1896 in order to give a practical scientific education to local people. The North Western Polytechnic opened in Kentish Town in 1929, focusing on social sciences and humanities. The two

institutions merged into the Polytechnic of North London in 1971. As of education reforms in 1992 to bring about equality between universities and polytechnics, it was known as the University of North London and was able to award its own degrees. In 2002 it merged with London Guildhall University to become London Metropolitan University. Former students at the Polytechnic of North London include Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn (b. 1949) and Mayor of London Sadiq Khan (b. 1970).

Returning to Bowden, has lecturing been somehow conflated with studying? In Bowden's 2008 speech "Marxism and the Frankfurt School," Bowden mentioned that:

> I knew a chap who was the head of sociology at the Polytechnic of North London for a period, an Irish chap, he was just a conservative really, a right-wing conservative. O'Keefe I think his name was. And every term he moved his office because there would be a brick, from the Socialist Workers through the window . . .[46]

This must have been Dennis O'Keeffe (1939–2014), who, by 1986, was Senior Lecturer in the Sociology of Education at the Polytechnic of North London. O'Keeffe was active in the Libertarian Alliance,[47] was editor of the conservative *Salisbury Review,* and became Professor of Education at the University of Buckingham.[48] Bowden also claimed to know the Shakespeare and literary theory scholar Dr Malcolm Evans (b. 1948) while Evans was working at the Polytechnic of North London and whom Bowden referred to as "a Marxist Deconstructionist."[49] This is the method, associated with French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1931–2002), whereby you reveal the fundamental oppositions in a given text; thus revealing its essential assumptions and ideology. Evans studied English Literature at University College, Cardiff, and his approach to the subject reflected the left-wing, anti-Establishment, postcolonial emphasis emerging in the discipline at that time.[50]

Evans remembered Bowden well and, according to Peter Fisher, the London Metropolitan University archivist, Bowden is not in their student attendance or exam records. Thus, it becomes clear that while Bowden was at Birkbeck, and for a while afterwards, he was informally studying English Literature at the Polytechnic of North London. According to Evans, Bowden was a "fixture" at the polytechnic between about 1984 and 1985. Evans speculated that Bowden may have decided to start attending his lectures, and those of colleagues specialising in literary theory and cultural

studies, due to publicity around the Patrick Harrington Affair. Patrick Harrington (b. 1964) was a prominent National Front activist who started studying Philosophy at the polytechnic in 1982.[51] Harrington's presence on campus, which including selling copies of the National Front newspaper, was revealed by left-wing activists and it led, by May 1984, to large student protests with the aim of preventing him from attending lectures at sites where students from racial minorities might supposedly be intimidated by the presence of a senior National Front activist. Harrington obtained an injunction against this and two students were jailed for 16 days for ignoring it. Harrington was eventually able to graduate, though there was a special agreement whereby he would be taught in a separate annexe.[52]

The affair was subject to intense media coverage, with *The Times* headlining one leader article "Totalitarian Nursery" and calling for the polytechnic to be shut down.[53] The courts demanded that a number of lecturers, including Evans on an initial list rapidly revised to target more senior colleagues, identify protestors from photographs taken by the National Front so that they could be prosecuted. A number of lecturers risked contempt of court by refusing to do so and Evans was relieved to have disappeared from the initial list. Lecturers who refused to identify protesting students risked imprisonment. But to identify them, especially within the multicultural ethos of the polytechnic at the time, would have been construed as a serious breach of staff-student trust.

It would appear that, hearing about the radical leftist nature of the polytechnic due to the publicity surrounding the Patrick Harrington Affair, Bowden began attending lectures by Evans and a number of like-minded colleagues. Evans was an expert on English Literature but did, indeed, focus on postmodern ideas such as Deconstruction and Critical Theory. "I can see him near the front of lectures, beaming at me," recalled Evans. "He was just curious in a philosophical way. He was very personable, I have to say. For about a year and half, as I recall, he was a fixture. Maybe he was there to stalk those with the reputation of being lefties." The polytechnic tended towards informality and egalitarianism, meaning that there was no problem with students using the staff canteen. Bowden did so, would lunch with Evans, and they would discuss Philosophy. "I enjoyed the way that he would gently push back against Deconstructionism, Psychoanalysis and Marxist ideas in conversation. He'd push back in an urbane and civilized

way. He was mildly Falstaffian; he had the air of a good natured *bon vivant*."

There also seems to have been no problem with non-students turning up informally at the polytechnic and, to Evans' memory, this is what Bowden appears to have been doing. According to Evans, it is quite plausible that Bowden would have given a lecture there, if only in a seminar of six or so people, as there was a strong "ethos of dialogue" at the polytechnic. Bowden informally attended for so long that he could probably justify telling the philosopher and "white nationalist" Greg Johnson in an interview that he had studied "English and History," though he implied he had studied both of these at Cambridge.[54]

The likeliest explanation for the gap in Bowden's life between 1985 and 1988, when he began university again, is a mental breakdown. It may be that the pressure involved in being a student, and being semi-independent, as well as the change of his father's remarriage, was all too much for Bowden, resulting in his struggling academically and in him becoming depressed. Also, Bowden's maternal grandmother died in 1986. Possibly all of this resulted in his mother's death hitting in as Post-Traumatic Stress. As we have discussed, he told Eric Galati and William Lee that he suffered a serious breakdown after his mother's death, but, as we have seen, this could not have been close to when she actually died. In 2003, Bowden informed Galati that he had been "hospitalised for four months following the death of his mother, suffering from deep depression."

With no job or degree to occupy his time, we can imagine that Bowden might have been attracted to all manner of unusual groups: the Libertarian Alliance, a Marxist discussion group,[55] the Wyndham Lewis Society (where he claimed to have caused a scene at the AGM in London),[56] and even attending some Geography lectures at Reading University, Engineering lectures at Manchester University, when staying with his grandparents or his step-grandfather, and English Literature lectures at the Polytechnic of North London. He would also have written prolifically during this period. We can also suppose that by this stage Bowden's father may have concluded that his troubled son was unlikely to ever successfully pursue gainful employment and he would need to fund him. For some of this period, it seems that Bowden was living in Crowthorne with his father and step-family. Bowden's depression must have cleared by about 1988 when

Bowden was applying to Wolfson College, Cambridge.

Wolfson College, Cambridge

Wolfson College, Cambridge, was established in 1965 as University College, to cater to the growing number of postgraduates studying at the university. It also admits mature undergraduates. It was renamed Wolfson College in 1973 in honour of a grant from the Wolfson Foundation. Bowden studied History at Wolfson College, Cambridge, for less than two terms, beginning in October 1988, before dropping out. For this reason, his death was recorded in the college's alumni magazine,[57] though he did not stay for the requisite year which would have permitted him lifetime membership of the college. According to Joanna Cheffins, the college bursar, Bowden was "briefly a mature undergraduate student" at Wolfson. A letter sent to Gregory Lauder-Frost, whom we will meet later, on 2nd August 1991 by Medievalist Dr M. J. Franklin (b. c. 1957), Bowden's tutor at the college, stated that Bowden matriculated in October 1988 and ceased to be a student on 1st February 1989, never taking any examinations.

In order to get into Cambridge University at all, Bowden must have performed very well in his A-Levels and in the Cambridge University entrance exam as well as in the Cambridge interview. (Oxford and Cambridge had their own entrance exams at the time, followed by an interview if you performed sufficiently well in the exam). This was apparently the case. According to Joanna Cheffins, Bowden received an A in A-Level English Literature (meaning he was in the top 10 per cent for that subject) and A1 in History. Dr Mike Franklin informed me that this mark reflected Bowden having taken an S-Level (Scholarship Level), which, in 1963, was renamed a "Special Paper." This was higher than an A-Level, in a sense it was Advanced History, and the number denoted that Bowden had received the highest possible grade, a Distinction. Thus, Bowden's A-Levels were an A in English Literature, an A in History and a Distinction in the History Special Paper. At the time such grades were outstandingly high, though Bowden had taken his exams around two years later than everybody else and raw intelligence increases with age up to middle age, so he had an obvious advantage over 18 year-olds.[58]

The letter to Lauder-Frost from Bowden's tutor at Wolfson College also stated that, "I do not feel there is anything more I can tell you without Mr

Bowden's consent." This may imply some personal reason for leaving, such as mental health problems. It does not appear to be that Bowden didn't have A-Levels, perhaps presenting fake certificates, and that this was found out—something which the Monday Club inferred because their vetting of Bowden could find no evidence that he had any A-Levels—as according to the bursar, who checked the archives, "There is nothing to indicate any misrepresentation in his application to the College." Bowden claimed to have socialised at parties with conservative historian Maurice Cowling (1926–2005) during his brief period at Cambridge.[59]

Mad: *Bowden's Early Literature*

In 1989, Bowden published his first book, *Mad,* with the Egotist Press. This was his own publisher, meaning Bowden had paid to self-publish his book, possibly using part of his inheritance from his paternal grandmother.[60] Written very much in the style of Nietzsche—a kind of witty polemic focusing on the nature of life—a brief quote from it provides us with its faux-Nietzschean feel:

> The distinction between life and death has been fatally blurred. Instead of contemplation we have action; head-long drive rather than stoic reservation; a freneticism as near as dammit to St. Vitas' Dance in an effort to hide the vacuum at its centre. In such circumstances, philosophy becomes a species of illness or social maladjustment. A failure to see how it is. A misunderstanding as to our prime purpose, which supposes the less thought the greater happiness. Death's finiteness is forgotten. Its inevitability traduced. Why bother about it at all? Just don't start screaming till the end. Juxtapose it with boredom not pleasure. After all, autobiographies lie all the time when they avoid excretion and death.[61]

As a reviewer has noted, *Mad* doesn't really espouse a clear philosophical argument, though its writer is clearly a "wannabe Stirner." However, it is at least penned in a gripping way and is enjoyable to read,[62] consistent with Bowden's mental health leading to fluctuations in his writing style as we shall see later. In the author biography of *Mad*, it states that Bowden "is married and lives in London." We will return to this assertion anon.

Paul Cullivan informed me that, "Looking at Bowden's author blurb on the rear cover of *Mad*—'Jonathan Bowden is one of the most radical minds of Western history, he touches, with an astonishing fusion of madness and cold rationality, on some of the most central aspects of psychic life. He is a great, horrifying but also vastly illuminating figure'—this is, in fact, *Newsweek*'s review of the Marquis de Sade's *The One Hundred and Twenty*

Days of Sodom." This is correct. The review is even quoted on the Penguin website.[63] Bowden wrote a variety of other books of varying styles including prose poetry, plays and other polemical philosophical analyses, such as *Aryan,*[64] in 1990, *Brute,*[65] in 1992, and *Skin*,[66] also with Egotist Press. All of them were dedicated to his mother. By the age of 31, Bowden had written 27 short books, usually with one-word titles.[67] Many of them were written under his pseudonym John Michael McCloughlin. In fact, the entry for Egotist Press in *The Writer's Handbook 1995* read: "FOUNDED 1989 to publish cheap, no-nonsense editions of intellectual theory, literature and propaganda, both modernist and traditional, intellectual rather than academic. The press is dedicated to the work of John Michael McCloughlin. 6 titles in 1994. TITLES: *Attack; Fury; Suck; Blood; Beast; Demon*. Low cost production, basic design and mail order distribution. Mss, synopses and ideas are not welcome."[68] This being so, the aim of the entry was presumably to legitimise both the publisher and author. In the 1994 entry in the same handbook, submissions were welcome but only Jonathan Bowden and his books were mentioned.[69] The 1993 entry stated that the publisher's managing director was John Mackay, presumably another Bowden pseudonym.[70]

The Western Goals Institute: Entertaining Le Pen

According to various friends, by the end of the 1980s, Bowden was living in a flat in Bethnal Green, seemingly being funded by an allowance from his father, who retired in 1989.[71] A member of, or at least active in, "Bow and Poplar Conservative Association," he was already overweight, bearded, with long, red hair, resembling a "portly version of the poet Algernon Swinburne . . . Dressed as a Victorian aesthete" according to Adrian Davies, who had met him for the first time at an association meeting. "He was a dandy, a young fogey," complete with blazer, bow-tie, long hair and a thick beard.

In 1989, Bowden got back in touch with Damian Thompson whom he telephoned at the *Daily Telegraph* to congratulate him for a piece of his that Bowden admired in *The Spectator*. Thompson was pleased to hear from him because he regretted that they had lost touch and he had been wondering how Bowden was. They hit it off anew and Thompson took him to the Academy Club, where Bowden ate the entire cheeseboard, and introduced

him to his friends. He told Thompson that he had been married and had got divorced and had a printing business, out of which he'd made a lot of money. However, Thompson told me that Bowden was averse to spending any money and "liked freebies." Bowden had also told Peter Rushton that he was "divorced."

It was only in the early 1990s that Bowden started to garner the attention of his political opponents. Stuart Millson, who had studied Government at the University of Essex and been in the Federation of Conservative Students, met Bowden at a Monday Club meeting in early 1991. "We hit it off. He was Mahler's First Symphony to the Monday Club's string quartet. He was a very persuasive talker, though he could get a bit carried away. He could exaggerate things; spin a yarn. He enjoyed excitement."

In 1988, American anti-Communist group Western Goals had held a fringe meeting at the Conservative Party conference which had attracted the Conservative MP Sir Patrick Wall (1916–1998) and Ulster Unionist MP Martin Smyth (b. 1931), both members of the Monday Club. The Western Goals Institute was launched in the UK in 1989.[72] In December 1991, in the face of 100 MPs signing a motion for him to be deported, Front National leader Jean-Marie Le Pen (1928-2025), who famously came second in the 2002 French Presidential Election,[73] flew into London and stayed at the Sheraton Park Tower Hotel, which was surrounded by 400 protestors who engaged in a riot. Le Pen came at the invitation of the Western Goals Institute to attend a monthly meeting of the European Right Group, whose aim was to promote cooperation between nationalist groups across Europe. According to the newspapers, Bowden was the group's spokesman and he revealed to pressmen that Le Pen would be meeting many prominent Conservatives, including MPs.[74] Bowden was never actually a paid up member but was simply brought along by his friend Stuart Millson.

Bowden gave an after-dinner speech at this event, which was at The Charing Cross Hotel on 6th December: "He made a very entertaining speech," remembered Millson. "He said that the left, who were protesting outside the Charing Cross Hotel, were 'deracinated, middle-class refuseniks.' He could make a colourful phrase." *The Mail On Sunday* ran a two-page feature on "the private dinner which sparked a riot on the streets of London" and which supported "Mrs Thatcher's call for a referendum on plans for a federal Europe." It included a photograph of a smiling Bowden

standing next to Le Pen.[75] The following Monday at about 8:20am, on BBC1's *Breakfast News*, Bowden was broadcast giving an account of the event to a BBC journalist.[76] In a speech in 2010, Bowden claimed that in 1996 he had attended the Front National's Red, White and Blue Festival in France.[77] According to Stuart Millson, the tabloid journalist Garry Bushell (b. 1955) attended a few Western Goals Institute events between 1989 and 1991 and met Bowden "who seemed quite chuffed and intrigued to have met a tabloid journalist." Bushell certainly sat at the same table as Bowden at the Western Goals Institute Summer Dinner on 10th June 1991.[78] Bowden later claimed, "I was once taken around *The Sun* in Wapping by Garry Bushell, who was well-known for certain attitudes and certain thought."[79] This was yet more fantasy. "Bearded fellow. I remember being introduced to him, but that was it," remarked Bushell.

Joining the Guardian of the Tory Conscience

Bowden's involvement with the Western Goals Institute coincided with his membership of the Monday Club. The Vice-President of the Western Goals Institute, who was also a senior member of the Monday Club, was Australian-born Gregory Lauder-Frost (b. 1951), an Oxford-educated accountant. The Western Goals Institute faction attempted to, and failed to, take control of the Monday Club in 1992. Lauder-Frost, who was an officer of the Monday Club between 1976 and his resignation in 1992,[80] told me that Bowden was:

> a member for about a year around 1991. He lied to us constantly so at the end of that year his membership was not renewed. He lied to us about his education, about his membership of the Conservative Party . . . He was co-opted onto the Executive Committee so we vetted him and he failed the vet. He then asked if he could resubmit his application with corrections which didn't go down well. He was also ringing round trying to divide us; slagging off other members of the Exec . . . I don't understand how he's got such a following.

Lauder-Frost further asserted that: "He was a total weirdo with long hair and a beard . . . like a hippie. His entire appearance was astonishing" and all he came out with was, "verbal diarrhoea." During Bowden's brief time on the Exec he was co-signatory of a letter in *The Observer* complaining about an article and asserting "Europe and the British Isles are a distinctive cultural area."[81]

In 1990, Lauder-Frost was the Monday Club's Political Meetings Secretary and the Chairman of the Club's Foreign Affairs Committee, and

also sat on the Executive Council. He gave me a copy of Bowden's membership application. Bowden applied to join the club on 4th October 1990. On his application, which Bowden alone filled in and signed, he put his nominator down as Martin Summers, who was then a researcher for Michael Portillo (b. 1953) and an adviser at the Institute of Economic Affairs, both of which Bowden mentioned on the form. Summers informed me that he was a libertarian then and now, had never been a member of the Monday Club, and knew nothing about being Bowden's nominator to join it, adding that he was surprised, because Bowden didn't seem "manipulative." Gregory Lauder-Frost—who resigned as chairman of Foulden, Mordington and Lamberton Community Council on the Scottish Borders in 2019 after being "found guilty of a racially-aggravated offence of abusing the student on social media in a threatening manner"[82]—added that the nominator should have been a club member, but this was obviously not checked by the membership secretary at the time. Michael Portillo was Minister of State for Transport at the time. He was Defence Secretary under John Major (b. 1943), and was later William Hague's Shadow Chancellor. In 2008, Bowden claimed that he once spoke to Portillo, about the UK needing the US to protect it.[83] Portillo told me that, "I recall Martin Summers (just!), but not Jonathan Bowden." Bowden also claimed to have met Michael Gove (b. 1967), the former Lord Chancellor, in the late-1990s when Gove worked for *The Times*. When I asked Gove about this he told me, 'Yes, I did know Jonathan Bowden,' remarking on how intelligent and interesting he was.[84]

Bowden's application also falsely stated that he had a Bachelor's degree from Cambridge University, something he also told Summers.[85] He gave his address at "Flat 1, 89 Wilmot Street, Bethnal Green, London;" a tall nineteenth century house. It seems that he did genuinely live there as Stuart Millson recalled: "I drove up to see him at a smallish flat in Leyton, two or three times in early spring, 1991. He mentioned to me then that he had a plan to quit London, for a place that he could actually own in Reading." Leyton is close to Bethnal Green, so Millson may be slightly misremembering here.

Soon after Bowden joined the Monday Club, he requested to be allowed to join the Media Monitoring Committee, and was told to go along to their next meeting and introduce himself. The committee would decide whether

or not to accept him. The next Media Committee meeting was held in Lauder-Frost's London flat on 21st November, at which the chairman welcomed new members. According to the Committee Minutes, Bowden had previously telephoned the chairman saying that "efforts should be made to get more right-wing speakers broadcasting." The meeting agreed with this and Bowden said he "would approach prominent people who might be willing to appear on broadcasts as cultural right-wingers."

Attitudes to Race in 1991

Bowden, representing the committee, took part in a Sunday morning phone-in programme, hosted by the journalist Andrew Neil (b. 1949), on 28th April 1991 on LBC Radio, attacking US black civil rights activist Al Sharpton (b. 1954), conveying the club's objections to his visit to the UK, and calling for his deportation.[86] As a consequence of Sharpton's reputation for inciting blacks to be furious with whites, his visit to Britain caused a media furore, with fears that it would result in race riots. *The Daily Mail* headlined "Keep This Man Out of Britain," told readers to brace themselves for "the most odious man in America" and explained that his presence in the country was "a serious incitement to racial conflict."[87]

It should be remembered that racial tensions were very high in early 1991. On 3rd March 1991, a black habitual criminal called Rodney King (1965–2012) was beaten by four white Los Angeles Police Department officers after a high-speed chase. The incident was videotaped by a bystander leading to black riots the following year when the officers were acquitted of wrong-doing.[88] A 15 year-old black boy called Rolan Adams had been murdered in Thamesmead in southeast London in February 1991, stoking racial tensions in the UK. With regard to the British media's reaction to Sharpton's visit, a journalist for *The New York Times* wrote that the UK was "a crowded island where some of the 55 million whites view the 2.6 million people of other races as unwelcome interlopers."[89] There was some truth in this. There had been black riots a number of times in the 1980s, most infamously in Brixton in south London and in Toxteth in Liverpool in 1981 and in Brixton, Broadwater Farm in London and Handsworth in Birmingham in 1985.[90]

As an indication of attitudes at the time, in 1990, many people agreed with Norman Tebbit's assertion that you couldn't call yourself British if you

supported a foreign cricket team,[91] and in the General Election of 1992 the Conservatives lost the safe seat of Cheltenham because they fielded a black candidate, John Taylor (b. 1952). One Cheltenham Tory activist even wrote to a local paper: "I really don't think we should give in to a bloody nigger even though Central Office have foisted him on us. We're here to repel the invader."[92] The Liberal Democrats took the seat,[93] stressing that *their* candidate was a "local man," it being clear what they meant. When broadcast journalist Jane Corbin (b. 1954) interviewed the defeated Taylor during BBC1's 1992 Election Night Coverage, "With hindsight," she asked him, "would you agree perhaps with some of your critics who said that perhaps Cheltenham wasn't the best seat to field a black candidate?" In other words, for her, it was obvious that a town that was over 98 per cent white was not going to elect a black man, even if most of its voters supported his party. It went without saying, as far as she was concerned, that most white people would not elect a black person. The president of the Monday Club in 1991 was the 13th Viscount Massereene (1914–1992). He was able to remain a Conservative peer despite asserting, "If you say I am racist, yes I certainly am, and proud of it. I am Anglo-Saxon and I want to keep this country Anglo-Saxon."[94]

Taking a Stand

In March 1991, Bowden was nominated for the Executive Council as an ordinary member and was elected to it in May unopposed. Bowden stated, in his manifesto, that he stood for abolishing the Commission for Racial Equality, the re-criminalisation of male homosexuality and mandatory death sentences for IRA bombers. The UK was subject, between 1971 and 1996, to a bombing campaign by the Irish Republican Army, who wanted a united Ireland. In February 1991 alone there was a mortar attack on 10 Downing Street while a cabinet meeting was taking place; London's Victoria Station was bombed, killing one and injuring 38; and two people were killed by a bomb in the centre of St Albans.[95] Partly due to the AIDS epidemic, attitudes towards homosexuality had hardened in the 1980s. For example, 62 per cent of Britons surveyed disapproved of "homosexual relationships" in 1983, while by 1987 it was 74 per cent.[96] In 1988, the Conservative government had introduced Section 28 of the Local Government Act which banned schools from "promoting homosexuality" or teaching "the

acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship."[97]

On 20th July 1991, the Monday Club held a packed seminar at Central Hall in Westminster. Lauder-Frost recalled that Bowden, "attempting to draw attention to himself, behaved ostentatiously and badly and openly attacked the Executive for 'not doing enough.' I stood up and told him to sit down." In a letter from Cheltenham to Lauder-Frost on 1st August, Stuart Millson mentioned the "incident at the seminar," adding: "I find Jonathan one of the most able and intelligent people on the Right and feel that he is a tremendous and irreplaceable asset to the Club and our common cause." Lauder-Frost replied: "I am surprised that someone such as yourself would give unqualified support to someone they have only known this year," referring to Bowden's behaviour at the seminar as "outrageous" and adding: "it has always been the Club's policy to vet new members, particularly if they wish to stand for the Executive, when we know little or nothing about the new member, as is the case with Mr Bowden. The vetting letters were despatched some months ago and follow-ups have also been done. Should all be in order there is no reason why Jonathan Bowden will not be treated, now or in the future, the same as any other member of the Club/Executive Council."

The vet for Executive Council members was very thorough and also meant that information on his original club application was vetted. It found that Bowden had no connection with the local Conservative Party at all. "Whilst this was not an absolute requirement of the club, most members were either members or supporters of the Party," Lauder-Frost explained. Bowden stated in his application to join the club that there was no functioning Conservative Association in the area of the East End where he lived, membership of the party, at the time, being exclusively via local associations: "The Conservative and Unionist Party hardly exists in Tower Hamlets." However, this couldn't have been true because in both the 1987 and 1992 General Elections the Conservative Party put up a candidate in Bethnal Green, meaning there must have been a Conservative Association. Jane Emmerson (b. 1957), the chief executive of a charity that helps disabled children engage in sport called "Get Kids Going!," contested Bethnal Green and Stepney for the Conservative Party in the 1992 General Election. "There certainly was functioning Conservative Association," she told me. "It was very active and strong at that time." Moreover, Adrian

Davies told me that he first met Bowden in about 1990 at a meeting of the Bow and Poplar Conservative Association. Bowden could easily have joined this despite living in the adjacent constituency.

Further, Bowden had falsely implied on his application to join the Executive Council that he had graduated from Cambridge University. He stated that he'd been educated there and was pursuing a PhD at "London University," meaning he must have graduated from Cambridge. On his application to join the club, Bowden had directly stated that he had a degree from Cambridge. The club obtained his O-Levels from his school but could find no evidence of A-Levels because Bowden hadn't told them about attending Bracknell College, as noted earlier. They further discovered that he'd studied as an undergraduate at, but never graduated from, Birkbeck and Cambridge, and that he wasn't studying for a PhD at any college of the University of London.

Bowden's lies were put to him and, on 23rd August 1991, he wrote to Gregory Lauder-Frost, accusing him of "plotting against him." Bowden attended two subsequent Executive Meetings while these questions of dishonesty were hanging over him. In October, Bowden was asked to clarify the problems with his original CV. On 31st October, he submitted a revised membership application form. In this there was no mention of the lies contained in the first one or in the Council application. He also called himself an "entrepreneur." He gave his address as No. 1 Seventh Avenue, Garston Park, Bitterne Avenue, Tilehurst, Reading. This was a mobile home park, or "Home Village" as it says on the signpost, amid an estate of 1950s red-brick houses. It should be emphasised that Garston Park is comprised of mobile homes, not the kind of smaller caravans in which some people go on holiday. Tilehurst is on a hill to the west of Reading and is mainly composed of interwar semi-detached houses and post-War estates. The musician Mike Oldfield (b. 1953), who also attended Presentation College, was brought up in Tilehurst and the actor Kenneth Branagh (b. 1960) went to Primary School there. Summers recalled Bowden telling him that he'd purchased a "static caravan."

In November, Bowden wrote to the Monday Club's chairman, psychiatrist and sometime Conservative Party parliamentary candidate Dr Mark Mayall (b. 1958), resigning from the Executive Council, stating: "I have decided to resign in order to devote myself to business activity in Reading." On

November 11th, this time to the membership secretary, Bowden wrote again, to rescind his resignation, having previously had a private meeting with the chairman and the membership secretary. In a further undated letter to the chairman, Bowden stated: "I wish to rescind the resignation which I offered to you several days ago . . . I am, however, mindful of the conversation we had at the Grosvenor Hotel last Thursday evening and I appreciate the embarrassing position which you have been placed in." At the Executive Council meeting in a Committee room of the House of Lords on 13th November, Bowden's letter of resignation from the Executive was accepted and his later letters rescinding that resignation were rejected. In addition, the club's Membership Committee had met on 31st October and recommended to the Executive Council that Bowden's membership not be renewed, a recommendation which the council accepted.

The Influence of Bill Hopkins

Eric Galati recalled that Bowden first met the novelist Bill Hopkins (1928–2011), who had a significant influence on Bowden, at a party in Kensington in 1992. Bowden certainly told Peter Rushton that he "worked for a few years for the novelist and journalist Bill Hopkins."[98] Adrian Davies remembered Bowden telling him that he worked as Hopkins' secretary as well, a point he mentioned in his speech "The Untold Story of Jonathan Bowden."[99] Steadman told me that he visited Hopkins at home with Bowden a number of times. Bowden took Steven Taylor to meet Hopkins in 1993, with Taylor concluding that Hopkins was "a miserable bastard who didn't like anything I liked."

Bowden's involvement with Hopkins, or discovery of him, appears to have been a turning point in his life. Galati told me that Bowden idolised Hopkins to the extent of gradually abandoning his "Bohemian-look," with a big beard and dandyish clothes, in favour of being clean shaven and wearing a smart suit; a change which seemingly took place around 1997. It may be a coincidence but this was also the year that Bowden's maternal grandfather (by adoption) died. Bowden was certainly clean-shaven by 1998 when Michael Woodbridge first met him. Only a few years later Bowden started to claim to be married with children, to be a millionaire, and started to be secretive about where he lived, as we will see below. In other words, he decided to adopt a persona of power and success. Hopkins

reinvented himself because "he was told to get off a bus because he couldn't pay the fare."[100] Bowden told Eric Galati that "like Bill Hopkins" he did the same thing. Bowden also overtly adopted Hopkins' philosophy, which was to be Machiavellian to the point of criminality, telling Galati, "You see, I'm really cruel. I have no compassion. I'm cruel." Once, when having coffee with Bowden in Leicester Square, Bowden snapped at a mildly-disabled person, justifying this "because he disgusts me." Bowden mocked Galati for caring about a dying bird: "That's so weak! Come on, man!" Bowden scorned. "That's almost like being a Buddhist!" William Lee stressed to me that, in reality, Bowden was "very compassionate."

According to Galati, Hopkins, like Bowden, was a fantasist. For example, Galati recalled Hopkins telling him that he'd been very busy writing even though his typewriter hadn't moved an inch in the months since he and Bowden had last visited the author of a single published novel. Bowden was apparently hoping to be named Hopkins' "literary executor," according to Adrian Davies, but there turned out not to be any unpublished literature; Hopkins made a living as an antiques dealer.[101] Bowden was extremely angry, claimed Eric Galati, when Hopkins died and he realised that Hopkins had been lying.

However, Bowden may have told Hopkins the truth about his being a bachelor, as when Eric Galati once mention Bowden's wife and children to Hopkins "he looked at me in wonderment." For Galati, Bowden always had to be in the position of power. Galati offered to help Bowden make his film *Venus Flytrap* at which Bowden scoffed. "No! Then *I'd* be working for *you*!" Accordingly, Galati couldn't make the film with his Vortex production company, but had to create a new one called "Bowtie," a portmanteau of parts of their respective surnames. Eddy Butler also told me that Bowden, "liked supplicants," and found many of his wide-eyed fans "annoying." In other words, he liked to feel that he was in charge.

Although Galati was convinced that Bowden was indeed a millionaire at this point, it was clear to him that the cruelty was some kind of act. Bowden, for example, once informed Galati, with "almost tears in his eyes" that, "I love you as a friend and a person." When Bowden discovered that Galati was feeling depressed, it got back to Galati, who by then had returned to New York, that Bowden had been ringing round to find someone to help him "because he's all on his own in New York." In about 2002, at a gathering of fellow-travellers at a house in Hawbridge Common in

Buckinghamshire, Galati recalled that, "Jonathan's behaviour took on a strange evolvement, shall I say. At the table he suddenly started to quickly fork his food and just as rapidly put it in his mouth. Very unlike how he would meticulously eat skate whenever we went for fish and chips at the Fishcotheque near Waterloo, remarking on the patience one needs to properly cut into such a dish. He was a bit tipsy and was attempting to be a comedian waving a straw hat about, and on and off his head in the next room." Galati then overheard Bowden remark: "I have four children. One of my three daughters has only three fingers on one of her hands, and she's the child I love the most." According to a different source, this daughter had six fingers on one of her hands. We will explore Bowden's fantasy marriage later.

Who Were the Angry Young Men?

Hopkins was a member of a group of writers who came to prominence in the 1950s known as the "Angry Young Men." The Angry Young men were generally from working-class or lower-middle class backgrounds, often having not attended university. Accordingly, their work focused on the lives of ordinary people and involved a kind of "gritty realism" best exemplified in the "kitchen sink drama"[102] of the playwright John Osborne (1929–1994) and his influential play *Look Back in Anger*.[103] Born in the late-1920s or early-1930s, they had never experienced fighting in a world war, had no confident British Empire in which to make their mark and were surrounded by a dying Church which no longer provided any meaning. From this emerged another prominent "Angry Young Man": Colin Wilson (1931–2013). A working class school-dropout, Wilson pursued a series of monotonous jobs in Leicester while reading voraciously: Nietzsche, Plato, Hindu religious texts; whatever he could get his hands on. At the age of 24, he produced the highly successful book *The Outsider*.[104] It explored the psychological type that is encapsulated by this term; a young man who understands himself to be of a rare superior kind, while surrounded by the grass-chomping herd. It examines a variety of such types, including Nietzsche, and their influence on society.[105]

The Outsider was a kind of DIY course in creating your own spirituality and philosophy for disaffected young people. Wilson rendered it all the more alluring by presenting himself as an anti-materialistic Bohemian who

wrote part of the book while sleeping rough on Hampstead Heath. For Wilson, "Shakespeare was a second-rate mind" and the majority of people were little more than "insects." Wilson's worldview was, in many ways, influenced by Nietzschean philosophy, to the extent that he was referred to as a "midget Leicester Zarathustra"[106] with reference to Nietzsche's book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.[107] In the 1950s, Wilson lived in a flat in Notting Hill, then a poor area of London, for some time with Bill Hopkins. A relatively minor "Angry Young Man," originally from Wales, Hopkins was known for his 1957 novel *The Divine and the Decay*,[108] later re-published as *The Leap!*[109] It tells the story of a British far right party leader, with whom we are invited to sympathise, who decides to have his internal rival killed. To provide himself with an alibi, he goes to one of the Channel Islands (based on Sark) where he becomes obsessed with a self-possessed, aristocratic young woman and he decides he must dominate her. However, discovering why he is there, she decides that he has to die. The key theme of the novel is that almost anything is possible if a person's "Will" is fully awakened. Colin Wilson summarised the main character, Peter Plowart, thus: "the co-founder of a right wing political party [who] although a powerful orator, is undermined by a sense of inner emptiness which expresses itself in appalling nightmares."[110] The novel caused a stir at the time, received savage reviews, was labelled "Fascist" and did not sell very well. According to Wilson, Hopkins' novel developed out of conversations he and Hopkins had in Paris in 1953. They both admired an earlier generation of thinkers, such as H. G. Wells (1866–1946), who were strident about creating superior people and who lacked a general feeling of defeat.[111] They were also strongly influenced by Nietzsche's conception of the "triumph of the will" among the minority who are truly great men.[112] Bowden was impressed by Wilson, some of whose novels he found under a bed at his parents' rented holiday home on the Kent coast when he was a child.[113]

Bowden, with his philosophy focused around Nietzsche and even with his somewhat Bohemian lifestyle, about which, as we will see, he was secretive and possibly even ashamed, can be seen as a successor to these "Angry Young Men." This is most obvious in the way in which Bill Hopkins acted as a kind of mentor to him. In his speech on Hopkins, Bowden summarised

the essence of Hopkins' anti-Humanist philosophy, likely putting his own words into Hopkins' mouth to a significant degree:

> "No. I don't believe human life is worthwhile just as an entity, like a slug! And I don't believe that any life is outside of hierarchy of race, of gender, of civilization, of intellect, of beauty, of spiritual preponderance! Everything is hierarchical." He would make a liberal statement, occasionally. He once said, "But then again, even within the superior race, the difference between the higher man and the lower. It's the difference almost between a near God and a worm!"[114]

Infiltrating the Tories? The Revolutionary Conservative Caucus

In 1992, Bowden together with Stuart Millson, who had been in the BNP between 1986 and 1987, joining them "on a spasm" because he was so disappointed with the Tories, formed the Revolutionary Conservative Caucus, which aimed to introduce a more intellectual and abstract discourse into the Conservative Party. The Revolutionary Conservative Caucus produced a magazine called *The Revolutionary Conservative* for which Bowden regularly wrote, in his ever-direct style, with such pieces as "Madonna and Sex: The Erotic Cavortings of a Deranged Bimbo."[115] It was reported in *The Observer* in November 1992 that the Western Goals Institute, who were described as "fascist and racist," and the Revolutionary Conservative Caucus, whose membership crossed-over with that of the institute, were trying to infiltrate the Conservative Party.[116] The newspaper published Bowden and Millson's letter of complaint which condemned Neo-Nazi violence, of the kind occurring in Germany at the time, calling the description of their group as Neo-Nazi "hysterical and inaccurate in the extreme."[117] *The Guardian* named them both, observing that their policies included the complete defeat of the Provisional IRA, a complete end to migration, "the monocultural hegemony of the majority," the restoration of the death penalty, the re-criminalization of homosexuality, restricting abortion and a "revolutionary war" against liberalism.[118]

The *Observer* article revealed that the Western Goals Institute's director, Andrew Smith, who declined to be interviewed for this book, had worked for a publicity company headed by Sir Tim Bell (1941–2019), who worked on publicity for the Conservative Party and had been a confidant of Conservative Party leaders. The piece stated that former BNP member Stuart Millson had attempted to join the Conservative Party in Cheltenham

and was rejected due to his "extremist links." However, his Revolutionary Conservative Caucus, via its magazine, was encouraging disgruntled nationalists to re-join the Conservative Party, with Bowden specifically being mentioned as a leader of the group.

In October 1993, there was a report on the group in the *Sunday Express* because Conservative Party chairman Sir Norman Fowler (b. 1938), later Shadow Home Secretary, had written to all constituency party chairmen urging them to expel members of the Revolutionary Conservative Caucus, condemning them as far right infiltrators. Bowden told the newspaper that he was a member of a local Conservative Association but refused to reveal which one. The group claimed that Alan Clark had said he would write for their magazine, though when confronted about this by the newspaper, Clark stated that he couldn't recall the correspondence and was likely just being polite.[119]

Millson recalled that the Revolutionary Conservative Caucus, due to it being known that it was run by two people involved in the Conservative-affiliated Monday Club, received an angry letter from the Conservative government's Chief Whip, complaining that the group's provocative name made it difficult for serious Conservatives to get things done. When the Conservative MP, and grandson of the namesake wartime Prime Minister, Winston Churchill (1940–2010) found himself in a media storm over an anti-immigration speech,[120] the caucus declared their support for him. Churchill telephoned to thank them. "JB was chuffed about this," smiled Millson. "We evoked ire and support in equal measure."

Bowden received media attention in March 1994 because two months earlier Colchester Conservative Association had voted that John Major should resign as Prime Minister. This was scintillating for the press, as Major had been unpopular since the UK crashed out of the Exchange Rate Mechanism in September 1992, he had a small majority, and he had badly lost the Christchurch by-election in 1993.[121] The support of "Essex Man" was considered crucial by the Conservative Party. It was believed that a certain social type—embodied in Essex Man—had moved from Labour and over to the Conservatives because Thatcher had reflected their values and aspirations back to them.[122] Now, Essex Man had turned on her successor as Prime Minister.

An investigation by *The Sunday Express* argued that this motion only

passed because "ultra-right Neo-Nazis" had infiltrated Colchester Conservative Association.[123] These included, according to the tabloid, former members of the BNP and the National Front. In January 1993, there had been a small demonstration in Huntington, John Major's constituency, by the Anti-Federal Europe Campaign, at which, it was reported, Bowden was a leading demonstrator. Former National Front and by then Colchester Conservative Association member David Moon was present and suggested to Bowden, Millson and others that they join the association in order to help bring about an anti-Maastricht vote. However, *The Sunday Express* did not report the fact that most of them didn't join the 50 or so strong association, not being from Essex. Thus, the vote against Major's policy was the genuine will of the Colchester Conservatives.[124] The Maastricht Treaty of 1992 marked the beginning of the European Union (EU) and was a central move towards a federal Europe with a common currency and foreign policy. Before the treaty, it had been known as the European Economic Community (EEC).[125]

In July 1994, due to media interest in the radical and strongly anti-EU side of the Conservative Party, there was even a feature piece in *Esquire* about Millson and Bowden. Entitled, "Pedigree Chums" it began: "Stuart Millson and Jonathan Bowden dream of England; a pure Anglo-Saxon England, where blacks and homosexuals know their place, abortion is banned and hanging rules. It's a dream shared by a rising group of young Tory extremists. Francis Wheen meets Maggie's Militant Tendency."[126] In the piece, the pair are pictured in Parliament Square with the caption, "Next time it will be in front of Number 10." However, by September that year, Millson had decided, "I wanted to go off and do something else! And political partnerships tend to fizz for a time, then go flat. He said that he (JB) was more of a 'European fundamentalist' and I was, of course, more of a *This England* romantic. There was no animosity. He said, 'Don't worry. I'm more of a Continental; you're more of a Britisher.'" In 2001, the Western Goals Institute was wound up and a number of its leaders, including the 7th Lord Sudeley (1939–2022) and Gregory Lauder-Frost, established the Traditional Britain Group.

In around 1991, Bowden proudly announced to Damian Thompson that he had moved into a mobile home in a caravan park in Reading. He thought this was a brilliant idea because it meant there was "no fuss." "He said it

suited him and that it cut down on the bills. He was quite proud of it. He volunteered this information." They fell out around this time because Thompson had a feud with someone at his club. The gentleman in question delivered a great deal of invective and Bowden, who wouldn't have known these people were it not for Thompson, simply sat there and failed to defend his friend. He would also "poke his nose in" to the various alliances at this club. "I felt betrayed by him, a bit. We lost touch, kind of permanently." Damian Thompson was also shocked by Bowden's fabrications: "He wasn't lying about anything important at school. I hadn't realised that his lie about his A-Levels was part of a wider pattern." Nevertheless, Thompson eventually felt "sad" that they'd lost touch and didn't know how to get back in touch.

Eric Galati also described Bowden as having, "a very womanish tongue for the reason that he gossiped apropos everyone we knew, even going into their sexual details of which he knew nothing." Bowden told Michael Woodbridge that a particular friend of Bowden's was gay. Another source also told me that this same person was gay, but this individual is certainly not public about this, if, indeed, it is so. So, Bowden does appear to have had a tendency to gossip.

The Launch of Right Now! Magazine *and Fleeing the Caravan Park*

By 1993, Bowden was calling himself the "Chief Editor of the European Books Society" and wrote an introduction to its re-publication of the German philosopher Oswald Spengler's (1880–1936) lesser known book *Man and Technics: A Contribution to the Philosophy of Life*.[127] Paul Cullivan communicated to me that:

> I came across Bowden's first self-published book, *Mad*, back in 1989; it was a mysterious little book with a baby blue card cover and was featured for sale in a few *avant garde* anarchist catalogues, including the infamous Loompanics Unlimited Catalog ("we are the lunatic fringe of the libertarian movement"). This is relevant because, when Bowden re-published Oswald Spengler's *Man and Technics* (European Books Society) in 1993, the blurb on the rear cover is actually Loompanics' own blurb for Ragnar Redbeard's Social Darwinist classic *Might Is Right* —Bowden had just replaced Redbeard's name with Spengler's. But it works well.

Spengler is known for *The Decline of the West*[128] which explores the processes via which civilizations rise and fall.[129]

In 1993, the magazine *Right Now!* was established, with those who ran it

significantly crossing-over with the Bloomsbury Forum, which we will examine below. It brought together a combination of right-wing Conservatives, UKIP and the BNP. It featured articles by or interviews with such figures as the philosopher Roger Scruton (1944–2020), Norman Tebbit, Sir Teddy Taylor and Nick Griffin. According to its editor from 1995 onwards, Anglo-Irish novelist and writer Derek Turner (b. 1964),[130] Bowden was at some of the informal meetings that led up to its launch and was "much more articulate than most." In 2002, Conservative Party leader Iain Duncan Smith (b. 1954) forced one of his MPs to cease to be a patron of the magazine due to its associations and forthright views.[131]

It's amazing to remember that, before the internet, the only way dissidents could spread their views was via magazines with small numbers of subscribers. *Right Now!,* at least, was large enough that you could buy it in the bookshop Borders, as you could the "Anti-Fascist" magazine *Searchlight,* but neither was large enough to be in the UK's main newsagent chain WH Smith. In December 2003, aged 23 and recently returned to London from Leiden University in the Netherlands, I attended the *Right Now!* Christmas drinks party for writers (as I was)[132] and donors above Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese on Fleet Street. This pub, serving beer since 1538, was rebuilt after the Great Fire of London in 1666 and regulars had included Charles Dickens (1812–1870), G. K. Chesterton, P. G. Wodehouse (1881–1975), Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) and James Boswell (1740–1795). The speaker was Sir Richard Body (1927–2018) who had stood down from parliament two years earlier, was a long-standing member of the Monday Club, joined UKIP in 2004 and joined the English Democrats in 2008.[133] He spoke on the subject of English nationalism, insisting that the BNP were actually "the Left." I remember meeting two *Vlaams Belang* MEPs there; anti-immigration Flemish nationalists.

Back then, I recall that I checked my emails once a day, didn't have the internet in my student accommodation (and certainly not on my phone, nor was there a camera on it) and didn't use the internet at all to research the doctoral thesis I was writing at the time. In 2009, in his interview *Why I Am Not a Liberal*, which took place at the Union Jack Club near Waterloo Station, Bowden correctly prophesied that the internet, which gradually began to take-off from about the year 2000, would gradually subvert the leftist Establishment's cultural control:

> The internet is the way to combat it, because the internet will gradually eat all those structures, and they will have to go on it in order to survive. So, the internet which couldn't be stopped and is based on American military technology from yesteryear, is that which will come to eat the controlling methodology which now superintends media. I think there was a pop band in the 1980s called Pop Will Eat Itself, and the internet is sort of the media devouring itself and becoming something different. Under 30 years of age, the only media they look at is the internet, because they can see all the old media on the internet anyway, so they just go to the net. And you can have obscure meetings with people, and it can be seen millions of times on the internet, if you have something that is regarded as worth listening to . . . So, the internet will break it and has largely done already. It's uncontrollable, even though the authorities can come down, and they can look at what's on your hard drive even when you don't know they're doing it, even when you're on the computer. Because there are no secrets in that world, you see. But at the same time it's completely broken liberal propaganda, and in the end they know that, and they all look at it as well.[134]

Of course, it also led to the death of numerous small magazines, such as *Right Now!* and its successor *The Quarterly Review* (now online only), as the information could simply be conveyed online and to a much larger audience.

Steven Taylor, who had met Bowden through the Western Goals Institute, recalled that in about 1994 Bowden contacted him to explain that he'd got into a disagreement with a black man who lived in the same caravan park as him and was being noisy. The black man had threatened Bowden with a knife and Bowden had supposedly threatened the black man with a hammer. The black man then attacked Bowden in a shopping mall "which attack Bowden told me he manfully beat off." Bowden asked Taylor if he could come and stay until everything calmed down. Bowden, who still had a beard at this point, duly stayed with Taylor in his basement flat in Sheerness, in Kent, for three weeks. There, he recalled, they had many fascinating conversations, with Taylor raising the issue of how people are either brainy with no guts or gutsy with no brains, implying that what is required is a "cultured thug," and Bowden averring that if people have had "a hard start in life then everything should be done to give them a second chance" once they leave prison. Taylor added: "I recall Bowden told me about him having to have his rectum syringed in hospital because it was bunged with semen . . . gross but that's what he told me . . ." It seems that Bowden would often male outrageous and puerile jokes of this kind. In the same conversation, Bowden told Taylor that homosexuality "leaves more totty for the rest of us." When Bowden left Taylor's basement flat, he left behind a sheet of paper full of his useful contacts, with their addresses and

phone numbers. These included Colin Wilson, Bill Hopkins and Michael Newland.

The Rise and Fall of the British National Party

In 1995, Eddy Butler, together with Bowden and a number of others, established the Bloomsbury Forum. This also constituted a cross-over between far right Conservatives and members of groups such as the BNP.

Between 2001 and 2010 the BNP attained significant prominence in British politics. The BNP's rise was a consequence of New Labour's policy of mass-immigration, combined with large-scale Eastern European migration due to the former Communist countries joining the EU. At the time, it only allowed white members and was open about the taboo issue of race, unlike its rival UKIP. However, under Nick Griffin's leadership, from 1999 onwards, it did begin to stress "culture" over "race." Griffin's BNP came third in Oldham West and Royton in the 2001 General Election, in the wake of race riots in Oldham, and saw its first three councillors elected in 2002, in Burnley, a deprived mill town in Lancashire.[135]

Unlike UKIP, which mainly drew votes from the Conservative Party,[136] the BNP more obviously took votes from the Labour Party via its white, working class support base. Indeed, some of its activists had formerly been Labour Party councillors.[137] About 47 per cent of their voters in 2005 had previously voted Labour, while 29 per cent had voted Conservative. Almost 70 per cent of their voters in 2009 pursued jobs that involved manual labour.[138] They advertised themselves as "the Labour Party your grandfather voted for,"[139] though they also drew some support from the Conservative Party. It should be remembered that although the British Union of Fascists, in the form of the New Party, split from the Labour Party, it also attracted cultural conservatives who saw it as "militant conservatism."[140] In the 1920s and 1930s, members of British Fascisti—the UK's first Fascist group, founded in 1923 by the heiress Rotha Lintorn-Orman (1895–1935)—acted as stewards at Conservative Party meetings, a future Tory MP sat on the board of its Grand Council and various Conservative parliamentarians made no secret of their sympathies towards Continental Fascism.[141] Nevertheless, British Fascisti was a separate party, though critics regarded it as promulgating extreme conservatism rather than Fascism. In 1924, British Fascisti had two councillors elected in Stamford in Lincolnshire.[142]

Eventually, using a strategy of focusing on specifically local issues, the BNP became the second largest party on the councils in Burnley, in 2003, and in Barking and Dagenham, in outer London, in 2006, and it eventually had over 50 councillors nationwide. The Labour government effectively prevented the BNP from winning seats in the 2004 European Elections and stopped it from winning many seats in the same day's local elections by interfering with them. They introduced mandatory postal voting in the regions in which the BNP, under a proportional system not used at Westminster nor on councils, were likely to win seats in the European Parliament. This boosted turnout and allowed for vote-rigging, with a judge stating that the system would "disgrace a banana republic."[143] The same year witnessed open persecution of BNP members, with their being banned from joining the police.[144] Bowden "gave an energetic address describing the terrible state of affairs in relation to electoral fraud in last year's local elections and its ramifications for this year's general election" on 10th April 2005 in a London rally in the run up to that year's General Election.[145] Nevertheless, in the 2005 parliamentary elections, the party got over 5 per cent of the vote—thus keeping its £500 deposit—in 34 seats, an unheard of level of success for such a party. In the same year and again in 2006, the government attempted unsuccessfully to have its leader, Nick Griffin and his colleague Mark Collett (b. 1980), the BNP's head of publicity, jailed for incitement to racial hatred, in Griffin's case because he had branded Islam a "wicked, vicious faith." In the first trial there was a hung jury and in the second trial they were both found "Not Guilty."

The party's "mostly genuine" membership list was leaked by a disgruntled member in 2008, revealing members in various respectable and vital professions but also that most were from relatively deprived areas and that having foreigners other than Muslims in an area was not correlated with BNP membership levels. The BNP secured a million votes, and two seats, in the 2009 European Parliamentary Elections, which used Proportional Representation, sending its leader to Brussels along with Andrew Brons (b. 1947) who had been chairman of the National Front between 1980 and 1984.[146] The BNP also had a member elected to the Greater London Assembly, where proportional representation is also employed.[147] It reached a peak of over 10,000 members by the beginning of 2010.[148] The party fell apart after disappointing results in the 2010 General Election and

subsequent local elections, due to internal squabbles, a sustained attack by Labour and "anti-fascists," and also due to the rise of the more "respectable" UKIP which would not discuss race at all. Some activists, such as Michael Lester, also blamed Nick Griffin's performance on the widely watched BBC political panel program *Question Time* on 22nd October 2009. According to Lester, a huge number of people watched the edition—specifically 8 million people, double the programme's previous high, partly due to protests against Griffin's appearance[149]—and "Griffin fluffed it. It was a bear pit," not least because the BBC filmed it in London, using a studio audience that was hostile to the BNP, as was to be expected of them. "Griffin had surrounded himself with Yes-Men who didn't question him. So he was left floundering. That appearance was a stake through the party's heart."

Eddy Butler stood for the leadership against Nick Griffin in August 2010 but didn't have enough support to remove Griffin.[150] Griffin very narrowly survived another leadership contest in June 2011, against Andrew Brons. In a speech in October 2011, Bowden vociferously argued that Griffin was a "dictator" who ran the BNP like "a third world country" and had to go.[151] In 2014, having lost his seat in the European Parliament, Griffin finally stood down and was then expelled from the party.[152] He was succeeded by technology teacher and former soldier Adam Walker (b. 1969), under whom the party has collapsed into electoral irrelevance.[153] BNP members were of three key kinds, according to one sociologist; the "old guard," "wanderers" who have been triggered to join by a specific traumatic event, and "new recruits" who ended up involved due to family friends.[154] For example, Michael Lester told me that he joined in 2001 in response to the Oldham riots and what they implied about the state of Britain. Julian Leppert joined in 2002. "9.11 was a wake-up call; an existential threat to the West that I could no longer ignore. UKIP just seemed too tame, a kind of Tory Party Mark II. I wanted to join a proper nationalist party, not a pale imitation of the Tories."

Britain's Intellectual Far Right? The Bloomsbury Forum

Returning to the Bloomsbury Forum, members would meet semi-regularly in a room above a pub called the Morpeth Arms in Pimlico, built in 1845 to serve wardens at the nearby prison. The pub is directly across the Thames

from the MI6 building. The forum met in order to discuss topics broadly related to traditionalism and nationalism, in an attempt to foster, or retrospectively highlight, a British radical right intellectual tradition of the kind that exists on the Continent. There would also be leadership meetings in which the executive committee, who seemingly took themselves very seriously, would discuss "what we were going to do to influence world history," in Eddy Butler's words.

In 1999, this culminated in the book *Standard Bearers: The British Roots of the New Right*,[155] to which Bowden contributed an essay on Bill Hopkins. According to Adrian Davies and Eddy Butler, Michael Gove was originally set to write an Introduction to this book, but didn't in the end. Butler told me that Bowden was late submitting it and it was so "disjointed and incoherent" that Butler had to "practically rewrite it." Butler told me that Bowden had a series of minor breakdowns throughout the period that he knew him and, in 1999, he may have been having one. *Standard Bearers* included a section in which Bowden interviewed Hopkins and enquired, "Were you an angry young man?"

> Very much. I think everybody was very angry and frustrated during the 1950s and from the end of the war onwards actually . . . The war seemed pointless to all of us. There was no feeling that 'we'd triumphed over evil' at all. The evil was that England was bankrupt, lost, directionless, purposeless. The wrong people occupied all the positions of influence. And the wrong people were masquerading as left-wingers, which I found just as objectionable.

However, this interview, it turns out, was lifted verbatim from a 1996 interview with Hopkins in the magazine *Madam X*.[156] Paul Cullivan found this because he was so intrigued by Bowden's interview with Hopkins that he searched for others. "Not suspecting anything was amiss, I was inclined to assume that Bowden had conducted the original interview, yet this could not explain the perplexing fact that in the *Madam X* version, Hopkins insists on referring to the interviewer as 'Dave.'" When Cullivan confronted Bowden about this at a meeting of the London Forum, "He went very quiet for a few seconds and then rallied himself and explained it thus; "I said to Bill 'I must interview you' and he said 'Oh no, don't bother, It's already been done . . . just use that — throw out the rubbish and keep the rest.'" But Bowden had lifted the entire interview. Interestingly, Adrian Davies met a friend of Hopkins' when he was in New York who writes under the name Margot Metroland. She remarked that Hopkins had never mentioned Bowden's name to her in the long decades of their friendship. She

suspected, therefore, that the interview might have been fabricated.

Standard Bearers included an essay on the politician Enoch Powell whom Bowden claimed to have seen speak,[157] and with whom he claimed to have attended a meeting in 1997.[158] There were also essays on Samuel Johnson and on G. K. Chesterton, among others. The Introduction was penned by Anthony Flew (1923–2010) who was Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Reading University and also a strong conservative; something that was possible for an academic at a normal English university in those days, but not so much at the time of writing with the Woke takeover of higher education.[159] In December 2004, he spoke at the *Right Now!* Christmas drinks, again above Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese. The Bloomsbury Forum leadership crossed-over with the Freedom Party in which Bowden was soon to be a key player.

A Laugh a Minute

Bowden was certainly extremely keen on books and a related incident is illustrative of his sense of humour, upon which many of his friends commented. Eddy Butler took him to the Hay-on-Wye book festival in the year 2000. It had rained and the damaged books were being sold off cheaply. Bowden, who, according to Michael Woodbridge, didn't have the internet at home, left with an enormous bag of books. "He stuffed them in quite indiscriminately: Schopenhauer, Hegel, history, culture . . . it allowed him to gain a superficial knowledge of everything." On the trip to Hay-on-Wye, Butler asked Bowden to ring and cancel his Bed and Breakfast reservation because he'd found somewhere more convenient. Bowden rang up the elderly couple and when asked why his friend was cancelling Bowden jokingly snapped back, "because he's found a better place!" "I'd just thought I'd say that!" responded Bowden to Butler's incredulity. Butler later received a plaintive letter from the couple insisting that they'd always had good reviews and begging to know what the problem was. "He had a wicked sense of humour; he'd mock people," recalled Butler. Michael Lester was filming Bowden outside Lime Hall in Cheshire when a jobsworth National Trust employee approached and told them that they needed to apply for permission to film. "You officious little gentleman! Just go away!" responded Bowden.

Michael Woodbridge told me that Bowden was "exhilarating to speak to" while Matt Tait reminisced that "the room would jump out of its skin when

he laughed. He had this boom of a laugh." Likewise, his friend Steven Taylor referred to Bowden's "uproarious laugh, like a mad John Bull." Friends of Bowden told me that when they asked how he was he'd merrily reply, "I am always superb, and getting better!" Bowden's school friend Damian Thompson recalled Bowden's impersonations of his grandparents from Manchester, whose accents he'd perfectly imitate. "'They're miserable people but they like their chocolates' he'd say and he'd imitate them sitting in front of the TV eating a box of chocolates. He had me on the floor laughing!"

Arthur Kemp (b. 1962), was the BNP's Foreign Affairs Spokesman and Website Editor. He was born in Rhodesia and raised in South Africa. Educated at the University of Cape Town, he is the writer of books such as *March of the Titans: The History of the White Race.*[160] Kemp summarised Bowden as "a laugh a minute."

The Australian-born actress, model and writer Lady Michèle Renouf (b. 1946) remembers being introduced by Bowden in 2009 at a meeting at which she spoke. The traditional Catholic and Holocaust revisionist bishop Richard Williamson (1940-2025)[161] had cancelled his appearance, so Bowden quipped, "We couldn't get the bishop, so we got the actress." At the time, a recent article in the *Daily Telegraph,* reporting on Renouf's defence of Williamson, had referred to "the beauty and the bishop." Williamson had been accused of Holocaust Denial due to an interview on Swedish television, filmed in Bavaria, where he'd said only 300,000 Jews were killed during the War. When this came to light he was thrown out of Argentina, where he had been teaching at a seminary, and returned to the UK.[162]

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Chapter Six

In Middle Age the Soul is Still Half Child

> In middle age, the soul is still half child, and it has the peculiar charm of youth and yet the thoughtful seriousness of old age.
>
> F. W. Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*.[1]

Karen and the Kids: Bowden's Fantasy Marriage

Before turning to Bowden's involvement in the Freedom Party and the BNP, it is worth looking in more detail at a specific side of his character; his inclination toward fantasy. As we saw earlier, Bowden claimed, in the author biography of his first book, to be married. Public records reveal that this was simply not the case. This has the markers of *pseudologia fantastica*. It is a pathological lie, in that he stuck to and even embellished it over time, to the extent that many photographs of Bowden, including the one on the front of the book *Extremists,* show him actually wearing a gold ring on the ring finger of his left-hand, obviously indicating that he was married.

However, even though Bowden wrote that he was married in his 1989 book, he did not start to widely tell this lie until around the late-1990s, as noted earlier. Bowden moved to his caravan in 1991 and Stuart Millson visited him there, "Quite a few times . . . 1992, 1993. He had quite a good library at the chalet! I was there once one morning and he said he couldn't offer me any tea or coffee and then, a person handing out free coffee samples, amazingly knocked at the door! He was completely single." So Bowden was honest with Millson about how he lived and he certainly wasn't claiming to be wealthy. In 1989, Bowden had informed Damian Thompson that he was divorced and Peter Rushton had heard this from others.

When Millson met Bowden again, in the early 2000s, however, Bowden told Millson that he was "married these days." Possibly, then, Bowden had two fantasy marriages. Bowden disclosed to Eddy Butler only in around 2005 that he had "a wife or girlfriend" who lived in "Portsmouth or Southampton and that he had multiple kids by her. He was a Walter Mitty.

Maybe he thought saying this made him seem like a more rounded person." However, Butler had known Bowden since 1993: "He added extra children every time he mentioned it to me, making a mockery of human gestation," Butler remarked. Michael Woodbridge recalled, "a cock and bull story about him being married and splitting up from his wife. He lived in a fantasy world." "He told me he was married to a school teacher and had five kids by her," Mick Brooks informed me. Matt Tait remembered that Bowden claimed to be "married. He had a wife. She was a very attractive working class girl and he had more than one child with her." Indeed, Tait recalled Bowden embellishing this fantasy to a significant degree. For example, Bowden once turned up late to a meeting with the excuse that his kids had been playing with matches in the sitting room and they'd managed to set fire to the curtains. Bowden related to Syd Bowmaker that he had a wife and children and that the wife's political views "were the opposite of those he espoused."

Arthur Kemp first met Bowden in 2007 and "got to know him quite well." He explained to me that Bowden, "was a fantasist, for sure. He invented this whole domestic life; a wife and six kids. In fact, he was a hermit and a bachelor." Matt Tait speculated to me that perhaps Bowden lied about being married and about his financial situation, because, as a Nietzschean, he had to project power and success and he was clearly unsuccessful in these two aspects of life. He added that Bowden's key influence, Bill Hopkins, used to pretend that he was English, despite being Welsh, because the English were the more powerful ethnic group. Bowden mentioned this in his speech on Bill Hopkins: "Bill was born in Cardiff in 1928, but as he'll tell you, 'I loathe the Welsh.' He doesn't like being Welsh, because he associates Welshness with victimhood, and so he aligns with the English because they're the dominant nation within the United Kingdom."[2] It appears that Bowden's decision to be supposedly married with children came at the same time that he changed how he dressed from flamboyant and bearded to conventionally smart; a reinvention, according to Eric Galati, that was inspired by Bill Hopkins, as discussed earlier.

Eric Galati vaguely recalled that Bowden had said his wife's name was "Jacqui." However, an email from Bowden on 18th April 2011 stated that her name was "Karen." The fictitious couple had five children—a boy called Alexander (later changed to "Richard Alexander"), twin girls called Zephra and Alicia, and then two more girls: Tanith and Dominique. These

names were Greco-Roman because Bowden admired the way that the Mediterranean was "highly evolved, long before the Nordics were." Apparently, Karen refused to use the NHS, so each of these children was born in private hospitals with each delivery costing Bowden approximately £3,000.

In 1999, recalled Galati, "Bowden claimed to be madly in love with a woman from the North of England, a conservative militant, who was 'perfect and the perfect counterpart for me.'" Bowden told him that he had made a will whereby she would be cared for. In about 2005, Bowden suddenly telephoned Galati to reveal, "I'm having an affair. I love her very much. I'm even rewriting my will so that she gets a portion when I die. I love my wife but I'm fascinated by this woman." Apparently, she was Spanish and married to an industrialist. "She wanted sex with him, so she took him to a secret cottage somewhere, where they had crème de menthe. She began making advances to him, stating he could spank her, whip her with a spur, or do anything he wanted to her," explained Galati. Of course, this was all complete fantasy, as was the postcard Bowden sent Galati in 2003 when he told him that his kids were "eating me out of house and home."

Bowden also said of Karen, who had many tattoos, that, "She's a very sexually active woman. At a certain time of the day I must satisfy her. She really knows how to do it." Nevertheless, explained Galati, when Jonathan had met Karen at an evening class "he'd turned around, and his eyes fell upon the most beautiful woman he'd ever seen. At that moment he said to himself: 'That is the woman I am going to marry.'" Apparently, Karen was from "a carnival-type family" whom Bowden referred to as "scum." Karen had been raped by her father, Bowden explained to Galati. She'd then gone to America and briefly been a Mormon. One day, Bowden rang to tell Galati that his made-up father-in-law had died. In another call, Bowden described how "fantastic the cremation was. 'There's the coffin entering the flames and all of a sudden all of the colours and sparks.'" According to Jack Antonio, Bowden told various people that he was actually a Mormon himself. Bowden also told Galati that her father's death left Karen so frightened that she didn't want to be left alone, leading to Bowden pleading "But I have to go out!"

Christopher Collet (b. 1946), a London School of Economics-educated retired civil servant, got to know the "social and gregarious" Bowden

through a friend, meeting him at either at a "soiree" hosted by Michael Woodbridge or at a celebration of Trafalgar Day hosted by Syd Bowmaker. "He was anti-TV. He seemed to imply that he had a mother-in-law," recalled Collet, and also an ex-wife and children because, Bowden said, "They go to their mum's when they want to watch TV." In William Lee's recollection, Bowden and his fictitious wife, who "may have been called Jacqui," had "four children and a fifth on the way."

Bowden's Various Infatuations

Bowden's friends all noted that he never seemed to have a girlfriend during the period they knew him. He claimed he took a girl he was "rather keen on at the time" to London's Riverside Theatre in about 1982 to see George Steiner's *The Portage to San Cristobal of A. H.* and that "she was nauseated by the whole thing and fell asleep."[3] If this is true, perhaps Bowden met her Bracknell College, but this is impossible to corroborate. Eddy Butler informed me of Bowden's professed loathing for homosexuals, whom he used to refer to as "inverts." He also once took Bowden to a strip club in Shoreditch called "Brown's" and "he was very fastidious and uptight." This made Butler wonder if Bowden might be a repressed homosexual: "There was always an aspect to Jonathan that his extreme anti-gayism was a cover. I know that's often said, but his total infatuation [*see below*] took me by surprise." Certainly, extreme homophobia has been found to be associated with being in denial about being gay and duly overcompensating.[4] Greg Johnson opined that: "I have looked at all of Jonathan's paintings and drawings, and based on his treatment of female subjects, there is no doubt in my mind that he was heterosexual." Certainly, there are many highly sexual paintings of female nudes.

William Lee wondered whether Bowden rather liked a woman called Dr Jacqueline Laing, known as "Jacqui," a half-Indian Australian barrister who eventually became supervisor in Criminal Law at Cambridge University. Bowden introduced Laing to him and would frequently talk about her in very positive terms. "Jacqui" herself informed me that the fictitious wife was definitely called "Karen," and was from "a rough dysfunctional Reading family." Karen and Bowden had "five children, to whom we gave presents! He was such an entertaining and brilliant mind, as well as an orator, writer, and fantasist, quite hilarious in the early days. He always warned of the shifting political terrain, amply demonstrated by the

pandemic years."

Other friends remember Bowden being infatuated by two women. The first was Michaela Mackenzie (b. 1952), who was from Bristol. I emailed her to ask for an interview but she did not reply. Originally from Northumberland, Mackenzie graduated from University College Cardiff with a degree in English Literature in 1973 before working for the BBC and then setting up a printing company. She served as a Labour parish and district councillor, first being elected at the age of 22, but by around 2004 she was a member of the BNP and stood as a European Parliamentary candidate for the party in the South West of England constituency in that year's elections.[5] Eddy Butler told me that he was at a meeting at Nick Griffin's house in Welshpool in 2004 when a seat next to Mackenzie became vacant and Bowden seemed to "clamber over the other seats" in order to sit next to her. They also went outside together, talking while she smoked. It seemed obvious to Butler that Bowden fancied Mackenzie and on the drive back Butler "made some ribald remarks. Bowden lost it. He took extreme offence. He got really quite angry with me." Arthur Kemp also told me that Bowden was "in love" with Mackenzie and had sent her "exquisitely written love letters, like something out of *Wuthering Heights*." According to Butler, Bowden and Mackenzie arranged to meet one day at Bath railway station, Mackenzie didn't turn up, and Bowden became extremely angry and lost interest in her. Michael Woodbridge had also heard that Bowden had "fallen in love with" a woman from "the West Country."

Simon Darby (b. 1964) studied Biology and Chemistry at Brighton Polytechnic[6] before becoming a communications consultant in the West Midlands and a member of the National Front and then its successor the National Democrats.[7] Joining the BNP, he was elected to Dudley Council in 2003 when he was its West Midlands Organiser. By 2007, he was its Deputy-Leader. He told me that Bowden, "had a problem with women, it was quite profound. He couldn't converse with women. He was rather shy and withdrawn around them. But he had some kind of crush on a BNP organiser in the West Midlands." Darby refused to name her, but added that this "crush" was an "open secret" and that the woman in question was mixed race. Eddy Butler recollected that it was more than a "crush," Bowden was "infatuated" with Sharon Ebanks, whose father was claimed to

be Jamaican,[8] something which she denied. Ebanks was declared elected to Birmingham City Council in 2006 before the deputy returning officer found an error in the calculations, caused by the fact that the ward was a two member ward, with each elector being allowed to vote twice, and the BNP, unlike the major parties, had only fielded a single candidate. This allowed Ebanks to sit on the council until the result was overturned by the High Court.[9] Eddy Butler remembered being with Bowden and Ebanks at Birmingham New Street Station when Bowden turned around to give her a kiss goodbye and "planted his teeth onto her neck." In an interview in 2007, Bowden thanked Ebanks for producing his now deleted art website.[10]

Damian Thompson recalled that Bowden expressed an intense animus towards homosexuals, but Thompson was certain that Bowden wasn't gay. "He was unattractive to women, and that was the problem. He didn't know how to start up a conversation with a woman. He once remarked, 'I know I'm not the best-looking guy in the world but I'm not the worst-looking either,'" a quip which one of their teachers found hilarious. "He'd wear a leather jacket, which was incongruous with his tubby body. He had terrible taste in clothes. He wore shiny shoes. He was a sartorial disaster, and he had this flat, droning voice. He lacked basic social skills but he had a brilliant mind." Thompson noticed that Bowden was a huge fan of the band Siouxsie and the Banshees, to the extent that he was convinced that Bowden had a crush on its singer Siouxsie Sioux (b. 1957). In fact, Bowden told Eric Galati that when he was living in London he had been the manager of various Punk and New Wave bands, that he knew Siouxsie Sioux, that "one day he had sat her down and had her listen to four hours of Classical Music, and that he had been her first manager before she became famous." This is obviously nonsense. She was already performing with The Sex Pistols in 1976 when Bowden was 14. At least three of Bowden's early paintings are obviously of Siouxsie Sioux.

Bowden's homophobia may, then, have reflected an autistic tendency to be very high in disgust,[11] with homosexuality tending to induce extreme disgust. This is possibly because it reflects extreme male femininity, which is damaging in a prehistory of intergroup conflict; because it signals mental instability (which may lead to unpredictable behaviour), because we are evolved to be disgusted by anything aberrant as this would aid social conformity, and because homosexuality reduces genetic fitness.[12]

Jack Antonio had wondered if Bowden might be gay but also wondered if he was simply unable to have intimate relationships. “He didn’t want to get intimate with people in any way. It was impossible for him to do that. He just wasn’t present.”

Abortive Leadership of the Freedom Party

The Freedom Party was established in the year 2000 in the West Midlands by Sharron Edwards (b. 1956), who had previously been Deputy-Leader of the BNP, and her husband Steve Edwards (b. c. 1955) who had had been the BNP’s West Midlands Organiser. It seems that part of the reason for the split was the belief that Nick Griffin was in some way corrupt. Specifically, he had used party money to build an extension on his house, arguing that that the extension provided a secure party meeting place. However, in the view of BNP treasurer, Mike Newland, Griffin hadn’t provided sufficient receipts to cover the expenditure. Mike Newland had, apparently, “revealed details of the party’s financial affairs to non-Advisory Council members and had spread rumours that Griffin had been drawing from party funds in order to finance an extension to his family home.” The Edwardses were charged with circulating a petition on these supposed financial irregularities and with stealing the BNP’s membership list. Griffin expelled these people, but there was a strong reaction against this, as the West Midlands was the party’s strongest branch.[13]

Griffin called a special unity meeting on Saturday 14th October 2000 at the Sports and Social Club in Womborne, Staffordshire, in which, according to Adrian Davies, who was also present, there was a panel that included Jonathan Bowden. They debated with Griffin’s *de facto* deputy Tony Lecomber (b. 1961) “with utterly amazing ability, one of those JB moments.” At one point, Bowden exclaimed “You can’t expel someone for asking ‘Where’s that quid, especially if the chairman can’t say where he put it!’” Davies added that all along Griffin had “been listening in behind a curtain, and that at length he emerged, dressed in black from head to toe, visibly shaking, and stood before the audience where he asked members to be friends with him again, after which he recovered his composure a day or two later and began a round of sackings.”

From Griffin’s perspective, he didn’t remember Bowden being involved in what he called a “thoroughly dishonest and cynical destabilisation campaign run by the Edwards/Newland clique. The showdown with them

was at an Advisory Council meeting and he was never a member. Their expulsion and subsequent formation of the Freedom Party came before I gave JB his high profile break, so any suggestion that I had some sort of grudge against him is exposed as false by this story. As for hiding behind curtains and dressing all in black, this is fictitious panto villain stuff!" Many of those present refused to accept Griffin's attempted olive branch, so they broke away and formed the Freedom Party. Sharron Edwards was elected to South Staffordshire District Council in May 2003 as a Freedom Party candidate[14] representing Womborne, an ancient village with many listed buildings. She resigned her seat in 2006.

According to Eddy Butler, with Bowden having built up a reputation as a superb speaker in the Bloomsbury Forum, he was initially asked to be "chairman" of the party. However, this fell apart when, in December of the year 2000, Bowden telephoned Sharron Edwards and her husband, who was also involved in the Freedom Party. One of their young children answered and while he was fetching his mother to speak to Bowden, the children began play-fighting and Bowden over-heard the words "queer, sissy, queer." He also over-heard Sharron talking and assumed that he was the subject of their conversation, duly slamming the phone down. He then complained to Butler that, "the kids were calling me a bloody queer" and resigned as chairman or as incumbent chairman, to be replaced by Adrian Davies. According to Steve Edwards, who is a pub doorman, Bowden "was completely wrong about that. My two lads, when they started fighting . . . my son would always call the other 'gay boy.' I thought it was really strange that Jonathan would think it was directed at himself."

Apparently, Bowden fabricated an audacious excuse as to why he could not be chairman. He told Davies that his father had remarried, resulting in a number of half-siblings. He and they were all competing to inherit the bulk of his father's fortune. Bowden, therefore, had to withdraw from the chairmanship in order not to upset his father, who did not want his son to be involved in far-right politics: "He was competing for the capricious testamentary disposition of a rich man . . . he had to fall in line to win the testamentary jackpot." This jackpot was, apparently, a variety of expensive properties in and around Reading. Bowden even stated in a speech in 2007 that he had two brothers-in-law, one in Vancouver and another in Texas.[15] In reality, he had a step-brother in Vancouver and a step-brother in Texas. Eric Galati recollected Bowden telling him that he had two brothers-in-law,

called Duane, who had fought in the Falklands War, and Dion. These were, in fact, the names of American singer Dion DiMucci (b. 1939) and his son.

Butler told me that the kind of behaviour which led to Bowden resigning as Freedom Party chairman—which Butler called "hissy fits"—was typical of Bowden: "He was very sensitive," Butler explained. "He was lacking in steel." Butler recalled a time that Mike Newland criticised Bowden and, "he just collapsed down. He had no real steel in him; a lack of fibre." Yet another time, after one of his speeches, somebody informed Bowden that it was "the biggest load of shit I've ever heard." Bowden was evidently crestfallen and responded, "You think I'm a clown . . . You think I'm a clown." "He was a stage performer but it was as if he had no substance," commented Butler. Simon Darby averred that Bowden simply wasn't leadership material: "He had a desire to be the leader but he was completely unsuited to be leader, because it involves more than being intellectual. He couldn't have coped with the grief that Nick had to put up with. He'd react emotionally."

Mark Collett recalled that Bowden had a tendency to "focus on negative things that people said about him online, but if you gain any sort of notoriety then somebody will write an essay saying you're a state asset or whatever. But he couldn't let it go. It upset him. It caused him extreme stress." Stuart Millson only ever had one brief falling out with Bowden. Millson was trying to edit a letter which Bowden intended to send to the *Daily Telegraph*. "He got upset and stormed off in a huff. He told me he'd calmed himself down by playing Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony." They laughed about it, but Millson later learned from Alex Kurtagic that this incident had upset Bowden so much that he'd written about it in his diary.

In order to give Bowden some kind of role, it was decided to make him treasurer of the Freedom Party. Bowden had a reputation for being secretive about where he lived, so Eddy Butler was despatched to the address that he had given on official forms to make sure it existed. Matt Tait recalled that Bowden would always have himself picked up from a landmark, such as a railway station or a pub, when he was driven to speak somewhere, claiming that for security reasons it was important that where he lived remained unknown. Eddy Butler informed me that "he'd always have me drop him off at Maidenhead Station then he'd hang around until I left. One time I watched him do this. Eventually, I suppose, he'd get a taxi to where he lived." In early 2002, Butler drove Davies and Bowden to a meeting at the

house of Sharron Edwards in Staffordshire. Davies recollected that, on the way back, Bowden had them drop him off at a particular point and then walked away in a particular direction. Butler and Davies then took a wrong turn. As a consequence, ten minutes later, they ended-up driving past Bowden, who by then was walking in completely the opposite direction. Bowden, his hat pulled down and his jacket collar pulled up to hide himself, didn't see them. Even a prominent "anti-Fascist" author has referred to Bowden as "enigmatic."[16]

However, in order for Bowden to be the treasurer of the Freedom Party, Butler had to find the place and take photographs. It was a "shabby caravan" in a caravan park in Reading. Matt Tait helped to clear the caravan of Jonathan's belongings after his death: "It was a squalid caravan," Tait told me. Michael Woodbridge explained that that after it had been emptied of Bowden's belongings the caravan was declared to be in such a terrible state that it could not be salvaged. "After a few weeks, it was towed away by the council because it was considered to be a health hazard." Mick Brooks wondered if this secrecy about where he lived was a means by which Bowden could "keep up the mystique." Naturally, however, some people had to know where Bowden lived. Michael Walker, whom we met earlier, ran a magazine called *The Scorpion* to which Bowden was a subscriber. Having only met Bowden twice he reminisced: "He was an ebullient character, as I am sure everybody would say who knew him, and I found him entertaining and worth listening to," adding: "I believe he lived in a place called Bittern Avenue, is that possible, in Reading?"

There was a highly critical article about a 2001 meeting of the Freedom Party in the BNP's internal magazine *Identity.* The rather catty writer (it turns out it was Nick Griffin) asserted: "The general air of unreality was topped off by the contribution of the new leader, bachelor Jonathan Bowden, whose strangled imitation upper class vowels and soft voice might go down well with his friends in the Spinning Top Club when this eclectic group of homosexuals and ultra-right intellectuals meet to discuss obscure artists, but his two speeches didn't cut much ice with the locals."[17] Griffin had heard from Tony Lecomber that Bowden was a bachelor and, as noted above, Bowden's fantasy marriage doesn't appear to have commenced until after 2001.

What Was the Spinning Top Club?

Bowden used The Spinning Top Club as his imprint when he self-published a number of his novels and plays using Lulu.com. He was, presumably, unable to get them properly published because, as a sometime commissioning editor of Arktos John Morgan remarked to me: "I was trying to persuade him to publish with Arktos when I contacted him, but unfortunately it was his novels that he wanted to do with us. He seems to have had little interest in writing non-fiction . . . And I can't say that I think Arktos was any worse off not having published his novels." However, he wanted to emphasise that, "He was kind enough to send me the first omnibus edition of his novels."

According, to Stead Steadman, the Spinning Top Club was a group of about 15 people who were interested in conservatism and the arts - "all that is best and healthiest in our national and European cultural tradition," according to a leaflet - who would meet every so often from about 1997, often above a pub in the Docklands opposite the Swedish Seamen's Mission church. There are various Nordic churches in this area established in the nineteenth century to minister to sailors in their own language and denomination. Now they tend to act, additionally, as social centres for expatriates. Between eight and sixteen people would attend the meetings, including the presenter of *The Crystal Maze* and former member of The Sex Pistols Ed Tudor-Pole (b. 1955). Eric Galati recalled that the group began in 1997 when Steven Taylor invited Galati to his home, along with five other men who were interested in the arts including Michael Woodbridge and William Lee. Originally from Greenwich, Taylor had been a squatter with Communists and anarchists and a libertarian before joining the National Front in 1983, but he maintained a strong interest in art. In about 1997, he explained to Michael Woodbridge his idea of establishing a "right-wing cultural club," as almost all such clubs were left-wing, and Woodbridge came up with the name.

Taylor already knew Bowden and invited him along as "he'd give it a kind of semi-famous clout, being him. He could be chairman or toastmaster. It would fit with his ego. But I made a miscalculation . . ." Eventually, the group became centred around Bowden's oratory and he became its chairman. For example, on the evening of Sunday 27th August 2000, at a meeting of the Spinning Top Club, Bowden gave the presentation "Friedrich Nietzsche: The Most Revolutionary Philosopher of the Nineteenth Century" above The Plough on Museum Street in Holborn.

American actor Jack Antonio moved to London in the mid-1990s as part of a show that had transferred from Broadway to the West End: “It was like Bowden was in a trance,” he recalled, “a fugue state. He never made eye contact. He’d focus on a point in the near distance and, in an hypnotic state, he’d come out with all these facts and dates like he’d swallowed an encyclopaedia. Though I never found what he actually said very revelatory.” Having a prodigious memory, especially an excellent long-term memory, is associated with autism. This allows them to compensate for the many deficiencies, such as in reading and predicting people’s emotions, inherent in autism.[18] For example, imagine that you are bad at anticipating how a person will react to your remarks, but you’ve learnt off by heart everything significant about them. This will compensate, in some ways, for your lack of natural intuitive empathy. In a sense, it helps you to systematize them.

Eric Galati, who would do performances of “Galsworthy monologues” at the Spinning Top Club, first met Bowden at the club in 1998. He found Bowden to be “kind” and was struck by the fact that all of the literature he liked and wrote, and also all of his paintings, were focused on the theme of pain. He painted a portrait of Galati which made him look frightening. Bowden gradually came to dominate the club, with it becoming focused around his own fascinating monologues. Apparently, Steven Taylor became so jealous of this that, in 1999, an argument broke out. “Bowden had a very self-confident, overpowering personality . . . he took over, as if he was the one in control. He had to be the dominant factor.” As the argument continued, Bowden said of his foe that, “He’s nothing, he’s just a worm!” so Taylor started punching Bowden. This led to Syd Bowmaker standing up and shouting, “Stop it or I’ll kill both of you!” and Bowden’s attacker being duly expelled from the club.

Galati recalled that, for a while afterwards, Bowden was left extremely paranoid, asking, regarding Taylor: “Where is he? Does anyone know what he’s doing? Where is he? Where is he?” Bowden was so shaken-up that he raised the fact that the chairman had been attacked at every subsequent meeting. He also started carrying a large knife with him. “The knife he wore under his coat but when he’d get up to speak or walk at a meeting of The Spinning Top Club one could see a portion of it hang out in the rear from under his coat within its sheath.” However, Bowden claimed this was because he had to get the train back to Reading and there were dangerous

people on that train at night. Taylor's recollection was that he realised that the membership preferred Bowden to him that he'd "ceded his position" to Bowden. He was also increasingly wound up by him: "his egoism, his presumption . . . the idea that, 'I'm in my aura. I'm fabulous!'" One week, after a few drinks at a club meeting above a pub, Bowden asked Taylor, "Are you organising a meeting for another week?" Taylor responded, "Yes, but you're not coming, you arsehole!" Taylor then "poked" Bowden and "slapped him" and they duly started wrestling on the floor: "My friendship with Jonathan Bowden ended when I jabbed his pinkie, pudgy, bloated mug with my rigid forefinger and then slapped him after he jeered at me whereupon he lunged for me and fell on top of me with his superior weight and we tried to roll and fight . . ."

Christopher Collett recollected another example of this need to be dominant, "an exchange of views with Father Frank Gelli on obscure cultural figures. There was a lot of ego there. It was like two bulls circling each other." Father Frank Gelli (b. 1944) is an Italian Anglican priest and author. He was confessor to Princess Diana (1961–1997) as curate of her local church, St Mary Abbots in Kensington.[19] Gelli was also a friend of the traditionalist philosopher Julius Evola. "I don't remember any particularly 'heated' exchange," Gelli told me, regarding the incident with Bowden. "I had dinner twice with JB in an Italian restaurant near Marble Arch. We talked about cultural issues of common interest. He liked to know about my old friends of *Ordine Nuovo* in Rome.[20] He had a tendency to hog up the conversation in ways that made him tiresome but that was all. I also met him on various other occasions. One was a recitation of *The Merchant of Venice* upstairs in a pub. Jonathan clearly much enjoyed playing Shylock. He told me he lived with his father. I found that odd for a man of his age."

Syd Bowmaker, the Treasurer of the Spinning Top Club, recalled the same physical fight as did Galati, having met Bowden at the club in 1998. "I loved Jonathan's company from the first time I met him," Bowmaker reminisced. "His interest in politics, his bonhomie, he was affable . . . he was just a great person to spend time with." According to Bowmaker, now a pub landlord but earlier the personal chef to Sir Peter Parker (1924–2002) when he was chairman of British Rail, Bowden insulted another member, leading to Bowden being physically attacked: "I tried to break it up but my then wife thought I was beating them both up so she launched herself onto my back to stop me."

Even at this stage, Bowden had not yet fully developed his Perennialist philosophy, according to Galati. Although he disliked homosexuality, he was, according to Eric Galati, essentially a libertarian. He was drawn to the thinking of Ayn Rand (1905–1982) because her philosophy was highly egocentric and because she was, like him at the time, an atheist. Bowden admired the critic of extreme feminism and self-described libertarian Camille Paglia (b. 1947), whom he referred to as "a man in the body of a woman." Galati recalled that in 2005, a number of members of the Spinning Top Club formed "The New Right Forum," though he had returned to America in 2004. We will explore the New Right Forum in detail anon. The Spinning Top Club eventually became the London Forum.

Bowden, Romantia and a Traditionalist Female Cult

Stead Steadman remembered that Bowden was part of a group based in Oxford called Romantia, who would dress-up in early twentieth century clothes and have extremely old-fashioned soirees. In the contact sheet Bowden had left behind at Steven Taylor's flat, he referred to them as "sadomasochists" and "ultra-right-wing lesbians." This group came to prominence due to newspaper reports in the early 1990s about one "Miss Marianne Martindale," previously known as "Miss Clare Tyrell" and whose real name was "Mari de Colwyn." Based in Ifley Road, Oxford, and also calling herself "Miss Partridge" and "Countess Rasendyll," she advertised in various conservative publications such as *The Spectator* and *The Oldie*. Examples of her adverts include: "Born out of time? Romantia is a magical kingdom outside the twentieth century" or "Strict governess gives genuine traditional lessons." She claimed that Romantia was a cultural movement, not a flagellant brothel, and John Tyndall, the BNP leader whom we met earlier, wrote to her to exclaim how impressed he was by the idea.[21] Romantia held regular meetings in Oxford in which men and women wore evening dress and Miss Martindale was noted to have "a suspicious 5 o'clock shadow beneath her mask." Many undergraduates attended the meetings and the group also founded the Anti-Metric Society.[22] Steadman attended such a meeting himself, as a guest of Bowden's, in about 1999. Steadman recalled that the person in charge, the Countess, was an extremely convincing female impersonator.

A number of the females in this group were involved in a related organisation known as Aristasia—from the Greek word *Aristos*—which was

earlier known as the Romantics and the Olympians. The group was set up in the 1960s by "Hester St Clare," a pseudonymous theologian at Lady Margaret Hall who was born in about 1920. St Clare argued that the traditional society had been displaced by the "Eclipse" (Modernism) which in turn had led to the "the Inverted Society" of post-1960s Post-Modernism. This was also referred to as "the Pit" by St Clare's follower the pseudonymous "Alice Lucy Trent." The Pit is an "inversion" of what should be; marked by the higher classes imitating the lower classes, the collapse of the traditional family, a cult of self, and general crime and chaos.[23] The group attempted to keep alive the few positive things from the time of the Eclipse, as did Romantia, such as acceptably smart dress, traditional manners and certain kinds of classical music.

St Clare gathered around herself a group of young, female disciples. They even developed their own cosmology, paralleling that of Hinduism and its different *yugas* or ages. In the beginning was "the Age of the Goddess." The rise of male deities indicated the start of Modernism and, thus, decline into an obsession with the "material and the quantitative," as opposed to the feminine "spiritual" and "qualitative." With the Eclipse, we see the increasing dominance of masculine culture and with the Pit this culture is, apparently, entirely in control. To avoid contamination by the Pit, these women recreated the period from roughly the 1920s to the 1950s, including in terms of restaurants, clubs and their own homes. They would decide on a chosen decade and meticulously conform to its norms. So doing was their method of attaining spiritual transcendence, following Evola's philosophy: They were spiritually withdrawing from the Modern World, seemingly following a kind of ascetic path. In October 2022, I spoke at a meeting of the Traditional Britain Group in London. I met a fascinating woman of 27, a science graduate who had seemingly decided that her decade was the 1920s, to which she conformed in terms of dress and even accent. She later informed me that she was teetotal, would only date native British men and, if she wasn't sure whether they were truly British then she would produce four candles from her handbag and enquire as to what this was alluding to. Whether she was consciously aware of this movement is unclear.

Aristasia, however, went far further than this lady. By about 1999, Aristasia consisted of some 40 full-time, devoted Aristasians, along with many part-time followers. According to English historian Mark Sedgwick, "Most Aristasians were in their 20s or 30s, with some older and a few

younger; the most frequent occupation was 'some connection to academia.' Almost all of these Aristasians were in Britain."[24] They divided themselves into "Brunettes" (masculine) and "Blondes" (feminine), leading to speculation that the movement involved lesbianism, and the women were not encouraged to have relationships with men. They also routinely subjected each other to ritualised, traditional corporal punishment.[25] It should be remembered how difficult it was in 1999, with the internet still in its infancy, to find like-minded people if you were extremely unusual. As a consequence, subcultures were more difficult to create, were smaller, were relatively more stigmatized, such people were more isolated and there was a stronger and tighter national culture. People relied on word of mouth, occasional newspaper coverage, or classified adverts at the back of mainstream magazines to find out about subcultural groups and thence on specific clubs and niche publications,[26] as we saw earlier with the case of the magazine *Right Now!* As of 2017, almost half of the Belgian population, for example, has performed at least one BDSM activity, a percentage which decreases markedly if they were born in 1969 or earlier.[27]

The leader of Aristasia was "Miss Martindale," whom we met earlier. She once published a book entitled *The Female Disciplinary Manual,*[28] about how to punish naughty women.[29] In 1984, her "school" for adult females, then calling itself the Silver Sisterhood, moved from Calderdale in Yorkshire to County Donegal. It offered adult "girls," whether holiday guests or permanent residents, the possibility to "experience the virtues of an old-fashioned childhood." It changed its name to St Bride's in the mid-1990s. According to a report in *The Independent*: "Life at St Bride's was, if nothing else, positively Dickensian. Maids, dressed in Victorian uniform, would answer the door and usher guests into rooms dimly lit by candlelight. In the schoolrooms, rows of tiny desks stood before blackboards. Bamboo canes were clearly in evidence."[30] In 1991, Miss Martindale was convicted of assault for severely beating a "pupil" at the school. Sophie Jones, who was 21, was stripped naked and lashed with a birch across her bare buttocks for breaking the school's rules in December 1989. The school charged its pupils £95 sterling per week, it was revealed.[31] Miss Martindale returned to England and Aristasia was duly run from a 1920s house in Epping Forest.[32]

In 1996, there was a fly-on-the-wall documentary on British television's

Channel 4 called "A Weekend at Miss Martindale's." It was advertised as "A behind the scenes look at the world of Miss Martindale and the society called Aristasia in the heart of suburban London which offers an escape from the [*sic.*] reality."[33] The three young women who attended pretended to be servants and schoolgirls, in which roles they would make mistakes and be spanked across the underpants by Miss Martindale or one of her disciples.

English zoologist Desmond Morris has argued that there is an inherently primal sexual dimension to spanking. To defuse social tension with an aggressor, chimpanzees present their posteriors to dominant chimps; they adopt the position of sexual submission. Spanking, in which the victim must adopt this primal position of submission, may have evolved from this. Clearly, being compelled to expose an intimate body part, even in a context where nudity is relatively non-taboo, is compulsory submission-signalling.[34] Miss Martindale told the interviewer, "I make [spanking] available because a lot of girls have feelings about corporal punishment and they feel they can't talk to anyone else about it. They sometimes have quite powerful fantasies . . ." [35] For these young women, such spankings betoken "a quest for purity . . . a means of spiritual submission."[36] The group also made money by releasing video games such as "The Secret of St Bride's" and another game about Jack the Ripper. Further, it promoted the idea, which has now received some acceptance, that BDSM can lead to mind-altering experiences and a different kind of consciousness.[37] The British journalist Mary Harrington (b. 1979) has termed Aristasia "the original feminist BDSM Cult."[38] The word "cult" is often considered pejorative and has gradually given way to the more neutral term "New Religious Movement." These movements tend to hold in common that all members are converts, most members are young and highly educated, the members tend to heavily change their lives often including severing former relationships, the leader has charismatic authority, and the group sees the rest of the world as wicked in some way.[39] Aristasia seemingly involved all of these characteristics.

Eric Galati also attended one of these meetings with Bowden and recalled that the transvestite leader was ostentatiously deferred to and was known as "The Countess." Apparently, anything from 1964 onwards was considered unacceptable to the extent that the group developed its own in-group language. When discussing money, prices would be translated into "Old

Money"—the UK's pre-1971, non-decimal system of pounds, shillings and pence—and a letter penned in 1999 would be dated 1959. Christopher Collett recalled the group's film nights in which there would be "up-to-date films," which meant, "anything up to 1963, the Year of the Eclipse, in which they thought everything went into an almost precipitous decline. "The men would dress in suits and ties, the women in dresses and so forth; no trousers. When they went out the women would wear proper furs." A number of lines of evidence lead to the conclusion that 1963 was the turning point in which the West flipped from being group-oriented to being individually-oriented (concerned with equality and harm avoidance over in-group loyalty, sanctity and obedience to authority), to the extent that a turning point can be identified. That year witnessed the Beatles' first LP, an Anglican bishop challenging every dogma of the Church of England, John F. Kennedy's civil rights speech and assassination, the massive civil rights "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom," and the Profumo Affair, which shook faith in aristocratic government in the UK. In the following years, homosexuality and abortion were legalised. It was the beginning of a period of enormous social change in a left-wing direction.[40]

Bowden was clearly interested in sadomasochism, as indicated by his fantasy about having an affair with a married Spanish woman who wanted him to spank and whip her. In addition, in his 1993 book *Craze,* a series of questions and answers, Bowden tells the story of ladies who lived together in Bow, where Bowden claimed to have lived, in a lapsed lesbian sadomasochistic relationship, in a maisonette, part of which had walls painted black.[41] One can imagine that this is a fantasy. In addition, Bowden wrote two books on the Marquis de Sade (1740–1814). The first of them, *Sade,* published in 1992, is well-written and popular-academic in style.[42] The second, *Colonel Sodom Goes to Gomorrah,* Bowden's final book, was published in September 2011.[43] It is written in a very different style; a dense narrative that brims with obscure literary references. It is obsessively focused on macabre depictions of violence, including the mutilation and degradation of corpses, and violent eroticism. The narrative is also hallucinogenic, as if the author has detached himself from reality and entered into a fragmented thought process of the kind that would imply psychosis. As we saw earlier, Bowden even lifted a description of Sade from Penguin Books and applied it to himself, as though he identifies with

Sade.

Bowden Joins the British National Party

According to Adrian Davies, in his memorial speech on his friend, Bowden was "full of enthusiasm, at first" for the Freedom Party but, "he wasn't the most dedicated leafleter and canvasser."

In August 2003, Bowden appeared on a platform with Tony Lecomber. Davies therefore wrote to Bowden demanding he resign as Freedom Party treasurer which Bowden did. Lecomber is a former clerk for British Telecom who joined the National Front in 1979, stayed with John Tyndall when he broke away, and by the late-1990s was part of the modernising faction led by Nick Griffin. Between 1999 and 2006, he was Griffin's *de facto* deputy, with the official position of Director of Group Development. Lecomber resigned in 2006 because it was leaked that he had discussed how to assassinate senior UK politicians with another member. He had previously been jailed for carrying explosives near the headquarters of the Workers' Revolutionary Party (which led to the discovery of grenades, Molotov Cocktails and two detonators at his home), and later for wounding a Jewish teacher whom he had seen removing "Neo-Nazi stickers" on the London Underground.[44] Lecomber told me that Bowden was attractive to the BNP because he was "an exceptionally good speaker and gave it a bit of cultural credibility. He was well-read; he could quote different authors" and this is why Bowden was invited along to speak.

Later in 2003, against Davies' advice, Bowden left the Freedom Party and joined the BNP.[45] This led to him falling out with or at least moving away from a number of more academic friends who were unhappy that he was now so stridently political. One remarked to his friend that he and Jonathan drifted apart in the 2000s, the time when Bowden became involved in the BNP, for example.In Steve Edwards' view, Bowden left the Freedom Party for the BNP because Eddy Butler did. "Everywhere Eddy went, Jonathan followed. I'm sure that was the real reason Jonathan jumped ship."

On 25th April 2004, Jean-Marie Le Pen attended a press conference in Manchester to launch the BNP's 2004 Local and European Election Campaign. Le Pen had to be escorted to his car amidst a riot by left wing activists. That evening, Le Pen attended a black tie dinner organised by the BNP in a marquee near Welshpool in Wales. Bowden was seated next to Le

Pen's interpreter with Nick Griffin on the other side of Le Pen.[46] Footage of this, including part of Jonathan Bowden's after dinner speech, was featured on Sky News.[47] *Searchlight* reported that:

> the disgraced former Tory Jonathan Bowden was talking at some considerable length about the history of the French/Algerian conflict in which Le Pen had taken a leading, and according to many, brutally illegal role. As Bowden waded tirelessly into Algeria's no doubt fascinating past there was some shuffling among the audience to which Mr Bowden replied rather tartly "this may seem irrelevant to our struggle but it is at its very heart." The speech continued and so did the shuffling, it was a hot evening. After dinner Le Pen got up and aimed a few hate-filled attacks in halting English at the usual suspects . . .[48]

Presumably the writer confused Bowden with the cabinet minister Jonathan Aitken (b. 1942) who was jailed for perjury in 1999.[49] Mark Collett, who was present at the event, told me that it was regarded as a particular honour to be asked to speak at this black-tie dinner: "Bowden was picked because it would please Le Pen; because Bowden was the classic English eccentric and charismatic." Paul Golding (b. 1982) edited *Identity* and was a BNP member of Swanley Council in Kent. Now the co-leader of the political party Britain First, Golding concurred with Collett, based on his one meeting with Bowden: "I thought he was extremely intelligent and a gifted orator, but I thought he was a strange man at the same time, a bit of a weirdo, or an eccentric."

Nick Griffin first heard Bowden speak at an event in 2003 when Bowden was still involved in the Freedom Party. "It was a blistering speech, I knew it would take some following. He joined the BNP at about that time. He was a gifted speaker; he never used notes. He worked off the audience; he had an uncanny feeling for them. He was entertaining and he was an inspiration." Griffin suggested to Bowden, in 2005, that he could be "Cultural Officer and Bowden asked if there was a budget." Griffin said £2,000, by which Bowden was "clearly impressed," and Griffin advised him to "spend it wisely," assuming he would organise guided tours and the like. But Bowden never spent the money, according to Griffin. He could "keep people's morale going" but he was not skilled in organisation. "He was not practical." Griffin stressed that "though he took expenses, he was not a grifter. He lived in straightened circumstances but he never asked for money. I don't think it interested him."

In essence, Bowden travelled around different BNP branches giving rousing speeches, having been asked to become involved due to this

obvious talent. Simon Darby explained to me that Bowden, "was a clever man, with an artistic side to his nationalism. I had a few run-ins with him where he accused me of not letting him speak at meetings and I told him, 'That is not in my nature and you can speak whenever you want.' He could really motivate people; entertain them." Arthur Kemp recalled of this period that Bowden "Would speak two or three times a week. He was extremely intelligent and such a gifted speaker. He was also a Hell of a nice guy. He wasn't malicious; he was likeable. He was mad as a hatter though, absolutely barking." Michael Lester would meet Bowden at the railway station and ask him what he was going to speak about. "Oh, I don't know," Bowden would reply. "I'll make it up when I get there. I'll make it up on the day." Lester stressed that if he advertised in advance that Bowden was going to speak at a BNP event then "it would increase audience attendance by 50 per cent. He was the best orator I've ever come across." Lester also emphasised that on the various occasions Bowden stayed at his house—his daughter Polly (b. 1994) would go to the grandparents and Bowden would stay in her "Barbie pink and purple bedroom"—there was nothing eccentric about him. "He was always an absolute gentleman, very respectful, no OCD; just like any other guest."

Bowden's rousing speeches were frequently reported in the party's newspapers; now positively, of course. The BNP did a great deal to draw attention to the issue of the grooming and statutory and non-statutory rape of white girls by Pakistani men in northern towns while it was still being suppressed by the mainstream media. On 15th July 2004 in the undercover BBC1 *Panorama* documentary "The Secret Agent," Nick Griffin was recorded making a speech about the issue at a BNP meeting in Keighley in Yorkshire. The documentary maker falsely stated that grooming was as much a white as an Asian issue in the area. In March 2006, alongside Nick Griffin, Bowden spoke before an audience of 200 members in Huddersfield, where South Asian Muslim men were claimed to be abusing local girls.[50]

> Jonathan Bowden, the BNP's cultural affairs spokesman, gave an excellent speech. Powerful with superb delivery he explained what we would all lose if the BNP doesn't come to power in Britain. Looking at our history through different periods, Jonathan went through the trials and tribulations of the British people, from the empire days up to the modern era, explaining the fantastic achievements British people have accomplished over generations.[51]

At a meeting in Swansea in October 2006, it was reported:

> Jonathan Bowden, as is his usual custom, spoke without a script and held the audience of over

> fifty spellbound for an hour—so much so, you could hear a pin drop. He covered a multitude of topics in an outstanding performance and the verdict of those present was that he was one of the most interesting and entertaining speakers to take the floor in Swansea for quite some time.[52]

The following year, at a party meeting with 70 attendees in North Wales, Bowden's speech received "a standing ovation."[53] Bowden also co-presented BNP-produced documentaries, such as *England Expects,* a biopic of Admiral Lord Nelson (1758–1805).[54]

Founding the New Right Forum

In 2005, the New Right Forum was established by Troy Southgate (its Organising Secretary), with Jonothon Boulter as its chairman and Bowden as its Press Officer. By the end of 2006, Bowden was the chairman.[55] It was here, in the meetings which usually took place above the Fountain's Abbey Pub on Praed Street in Paddington, where most of Bowden's most exhilarating and well-known speeches were recorded or filmed. Apparently, in 1928 some spores blew into Alexander Fleming's (1881–1955) open window from this nineteenth century pub, which was opposite his laboratory at St Mary's Hospital, and this chance event began his discovery of penicillin.[56]

Now the Fountain's Abbey was inspiring a different kind of knowledge. The New Right Forum members were together in a public house; that symbol of Englishness in which men can freely discuss how they feel and also enter a kind of alternative world, via alcohol, entered into by their ancestors in the same places for hundreds of years. In his novel, *The Flying Inn*, G. K. Chesterton wrote of an England which had attempted to deal with perceived alcoholism by converting to an idiosyncratic form of Islam and, so, shutting down all the pubs. Two characters rebel against this by pulling a cart full of booze through the countryside ("The Flying Inn") and looking for loopholes in the law. In the novel, Chesterton romanticises the ancientness of English taverns; the idea that drinking in them is communing with the ancestors as evidenced in the ancient allusions in their names: "'The Saracen's Head' out of Araby came, / King Richard riding in arms like flame, / And where he established his folk to be fed, / He set up a spear —and the Saracen's Head."[57]

At one such pub was a group of intelligent and knowledge-hungry English people. These people realised that the Blair government was destroying

traditional English liberties, such as double jeopardy and freedom of speech and association (with BNP members by then banned from various professions in a way that National Front members had never been under previous governments) but wanted to understand how and why. As one academic has summarised, they were a community of seekers who were united in a quest for hidden knowledge and for forbidden truths which they correctly believed were being denied to them by mainstream society.[58] The room above the pub was, in this sense, the cultural underground.

New Right Forum meetings also took place above The Lamb on Lamb's Conduit Street, built in the 1720s, named after a sixteenth century cloth merchant and frequented by Charles Dickens; and The Horse, near Waterloo Station, according to Mick Brooks. The attendees were an interesting mix: "old fashioned British nationalists, affected public school types with blazers and mustard trousers, and, for want of a better term, pig ignorant neo-Nazi skinheads."[59] But, in that ideas tend to shift due to shifts among the elite,[60] the presence of these "affected public school types" is particularly significant.

In December 2013, *Searchlight* published an in-depth article on the New Right Forum, listing all of the speeches and their dates up to that point. This was possible because the group had been infiltrated by them, as we will see below. The first meeting took place on 16th January 2005 with Jonathan Bowden talking on "The History of the British New Right." There were meetings approximately every few months thereafter, with Bowden speaking frequently. Other speakers included Alexandr Dugin, whose ideas are often said to have influenced Russian president Vladimir Putin,[61] and the Finnish philosopher Kai Murros (b. 1969). Regarding Bowden, Murros remarked that:

> He was the absolute centre of the attention; he was terribly entertaining and people were circling him like planets circling the sun. I stood in awe of him, his thunderous voice and his command of the English language, while I felt like I was some awkward Eastern European with a funny accent. I did my second trip to London in 2007 only to hear him more. When he was talking to people around him it was like a theatrical play.

Assorted friends and colleagues of Bowden's were speakers at various points: Lady Michèle Renouf on "Free Speech: Irving in Prison," Michael Woodbridge on "Henry Williamson: Regeneration of Man Through Nature," Adrian Davies on "The Guns of August . . . and September: The First and Second World Wars in Popular Myth and Memory," Peter Rushton

on "Nationalism: Revise or Rebrand?" and Michael Newland on "Globalisation: How Britain Was Undermined."[62]

Commenting on Bowden's performances at the New Right Forum, Mick Brooks told me:

> It blew me away. It was mediumship as opposed to pure oratory. He galvanized the whole room. He went into an altered state and took the whole room with him. It was a fantastical process. It was like he was a spirit guide for the living. He had no notes or anything. He'd go off on tangents but he'd pull it all together. It was like something I'd never experienced before.

For Alexander Baron, who gained attention in 1996 for successfully suing small businesses that stocked copies of *Searchlight* which he claimed defamed him[63] and who also spoke at the New Right Forum, Bowden combined being "an easygoing sort of bloke" with being "a very powerful speaker." The New Right Forum also ran a magazine, *New Imperium: Metapolitical Journal of the New Right.* Bowden frequently contributed articles to this. For example, in the second edition he presented a damning critique of the Turner Prize, the annual British art prize which is notorious for such postmodern pieces as an unmade bed, a shark floating in formaldehyde or an empty room with a light turning on and off. Bowden made the insightful point that, ". . . if Turner Prize art confounds originality what can it be based on? The response must be 'theory;' hence the empty moniker 'conceptual' art. This relates to a whole clutch of theories of a counter-cultural vantage point." Such art is a means of expressing postmodern theory.[64]

The IONA (Islands of the North Atlantic) London Forum

The IONA London Forum came to prominence in about 2011. It was led by former soldier Jez Bedford-Turner who was jailed in 2018 for inciting his followers to "free England from Jewish control."[65] According to Peter Rushton, this split, of sorts, in which the London Forum, which had previously been known as the Spinning Top Club, began to parallel the New Right Forum, was due to disagreements with Troy Southgate, but Bowden was happy to speak at this as well as at the New Right Forum. Southgate declined to be interviewed for this book.

The London Forum's first meeting, in August of that year, included a presentation by Bowden on Bill Hopkins, whom we have already discussed. Other speakers during its period of operation included, on 19th May 2012, Günter Deckert (1940–2022), who had been leader of the National

Democratic Party of Germany. He spoke on the same evening that Michael Woodbridge presented his eulogy on Bowden: "Jonathan Bowden: A Living Memory." On other occasions, Lady Michèle Renouf spoke on "The Fraud of Feminism," Dr Tomislav Sunic (b. 1953), on an evening when Bowden presented, "Western Civilization: A Bullet Through Steel," spoke on "Ernst Jünger and the Balkanisation of Europe," and Arthur Kemp lectured on "The Racial Origins of the Ancient Egyptians and the Situation for the White Race Now."[66] Clearly, at both forums, a network of right wing dissidents explored assorted "forbidden" or "offensive" topics including historical revisionism, the importance of unfettered free speech, the triumphs of the West, and British Fascist sympathisers.

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them, which explains the female propensity to have rape fantasies involving a high status and attractive male, which two thirds of females report having, and the fact that these correlate with evidence of socio-sexuality, which develops, often, out of life being experienced as frightening and unstable, such that you must pass on your genes quickly. So we can understand how this fetish develops. It makes sense that this common fetish, as with fetishes in general, is associated with autism, due to the autistic focus on objects, due to the fetish's ritualistic and repetitive dimensions and due to the unstable way in which autistics experience the world which would push them towards an association between sex and power. Consistent with this, hyper-sexuality is associated with sexual sadism. Such a model also explains why people can develop spanking fetishes despite few or no childhood spankings, though some may be traumatised by childhood spankings, re-enact them in order to control them and be aroused by the sexual dynamics of spanking. Males tend to be sadists and females masochists, aroused by being dominated as, in a dangerous ecology, the offspring must inherit dominance and a male must be able to dominate a female if he carries these traits. However, male masochism does occur, an overall sadist might sometimes enjoy masochism. It may be that this is arousing because it implies that the female is highly dominant and, thus, she is genetically fit: her genes are more likely to survive in an unstable and dangerous ecology. For more detail see, E. Dutton, *Sent Before Their Time: Genius, Charisma and Being Born Prematurely* (Melbourne: Manticore Press, 2022). Late onset transgenderism is also associated with autism. It involves a sexual fetish wherein a man becomes sexually aroused by the idea of himself as a female. Multiple fetishes may be comorbid. See, J. Bouzy, J. Brunelle, D. Cohen and A. Condat, "Transidentities and autism spectrum disorder: A systematic review," *Psychiatry Research,* 323 (2023): 115176.

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Examiner (19th October 2018), https://www.examinerlive.co.uk/news/west-yorkshire-news/huddersfield-grooming-gang-operation-tendersea-15290153. It has now become clear that social workers and journalists deliberately covered-up what was happening, for fear of accusations of racism. See P. McLoughlin, *Easy Meat: Inside Britain's Grooming Gang Scandal* (Nashville, TN: New English Review Press, 2016). As I have explored elsewhere, this grooming gang process makes perfect sense from an evolutionary perspective. Living in a patriarchal subculture, these Muslim males lack access to females. In our prehistory of polygamy, females would sexually select for high status males, leading to a large percentage of males who could not access women. They would form gangs and gang-rape the women whom they could find. They would also invade other tribes, kill the males and take the females. Sexually controlling the native females is a way of undermining native male morale: "You cannot protect your females." Also, in that females sexually select for status (as high status males will have more resources and may even possess better strength and health), females will be expected, all else being equal, to sexually select for the successful invader, as his successful invasion is signalling his useful qualities. See, E. Dutton, *The Silent Rape Epidemic: How the Finns Were Groomed to Love Their Abusers* (Oulu: Thomas Edward Press, 2019). See also, R. Thornhill and C. Palmer, *A Natural History of Rape: Biological Bases of Sexual Coercion* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001).

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CHAPTER SEVEN

It is Better to Die Young: The Fall and Rise and Fall of Jonathan Bowden

> It is better to die young than to outlive one's good fortune.
>
> F. W. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*.[1]

The Smear Campaign Against Bowden

In July 2007, Jonathan Bowden dramatically resigned as the BNP's Cultural Officer and from the party's Advisory Council. He did this because it had been alleged on a nationalist blog called "Covert Undercover Nuisance Tactics" that he was a paedophile. According to *Lancaster Unity,* the nationalist blog was headed by a friend of Nick Griffin's called Tommy Williams. The blog entry, since removed from the internet, was entitled "Is Jonathan Bowden a Nonce?" It made a series of insinuations and also accused Bowden of having "Gary Glitteresque sideburns,"[2] a reference to the Glam Rocker Gary Glitter (b. 1944) who was convicted of downloading child pornography in 1999 and of child sexual abuse in 2006.[3]

Bowden was devastated by this completely false insinuation. According to Nick Griffin, he demanded that Griffin "take action" against the man responsible for the blog entry. Griffin explained to Bowden that the individual in question was not a party member and, further, that unpleasantness of this kind was to be expected if one became involved in politics and that Bowden needed to "grow a thick skin." Mark Collett disclosed to me that, "He blamed me for it as well, because he believed I was Griffin's right-hand man. He wrote to me that, 'I know you're involved. I know you've got something to do with this.'"

In Eddy Butler's recollection, Butler told Bowden about the smear and Bowden responded, "'Oh . . . I'm finished. I can't carry on. That's me done.' He just sort of collapsed and resigned as the Cultural Officer." Bowden's letter of resignation was leaked to *Lancaster Unity.* He wrote that Martin Reynolds, the head of party security, had texted him that:

> Tommy Williams' tendentious and lying filth about me had been taken down. It appears that not only is this not the case but the criminal abuse has got ten times worse. I have given a lot of time and effort to this party over the last 4 years. I am now being accused repeatedly of being a paedophile on the Internet by one of your quote unquote old mates. I am sick and tired of the human scum and vermin which proliferate in such shallow waters. To be accused of being a child abuser is amongst the lowest thing that can possibly be imagined. To even refute such allegations from criminal psychopaths like these is beneath one's dignity. None the less, I REFUTE EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEIR LIES AS DISTASTFUL GARBAGE. I will seek to have police action carried out against this vile Internet site, but I also intend to resign as cultural officer, advisory council member and member of the BNP. I do not wish to associate—even tangentially—with such low-grade lycanthropes and psychotic criminals. Williams, I gather, is a convicted drug dealer and career criminal with a string of convictions. I have many other and better things to do with my life in future. The stench of this rabble, lumpen and canaille is displeasing to me. I shall devote myself to the world of the arts from which I originate and to which I shall return.

Maybe the problem was that, from Bowden's perspective, he came across as rather odd and knew it and, as such, people might believe he was a "nonce." Nick Griffin recalled that Bowden's reaction to the allegation was "hysterical . . . He was not superman stuff. He was screaming and angry. There was something strange about him."

Some critics have alleged that Griffin was somehow behind the smear against Bowden, stating: "Griffin's attack dogs at Covert suggested [*Bowden*] was a paedophile," as if Griffin perceived Bowden's popularity within the party as some kind of threat to his leadership.[4] Martin Webster alleged that the smear campaign against Bowden occurred because Bowden had supported Chris Jackson when he stood against Griffin for the BNP leadership in July 2007.[5] Bowden was apparently furious when Griffin declared that BNP members must not associate with Lady Michèle Renouf, who had spoken at a New Right meeting he'd hosted. Bowden threatened to resign from the party over the issue, and, thereafter, began supporting Jackson.[6] According to Webster:

> It was widely discussed earlier this month that Griffin had been shocked at the large number of senior party officials who had signed Jackson's nomination paper. Leading that group of senior members was accomplished platform speaker Jonathan Bowden. Griffin is sure to have noted that next year Bowden would have been a BNP member for five years—and thus come into possession of the full set of qualifications required to stand as a candidate for the BNP chairmanship.[7]

Peter Rushton agreed, stating that he had warned Bowden "in a jocular fashion" that "Griffin will be after you" because he would see anyone who was reasonably intelligent and charismatic as a threat. "Only one person

was allowed to be capable of stringing two sentences together, and that was Nick Griffin. Bowden was too well-educated to be able to stay in Griffin's circles."

Mark Collett related that Bowden, "always felt other people were holding him back. He always sided with the anti-Griffin faction. He felt he was destined to play a greater role. But he didn't have the kind of mind that could run an organisation. He wasn't organised." Bowden even told a New Right meeting in 2008 that, "Griffin's not a pal of mine, you know."[8] Related to this, Eddy Butler informed me of the coping mechanism Bowden would employ for his inability to be the leader of a political party: "He used Bill Hopkins as an excuse for why he couldn't get too publicly involved—couldn't be 'the leader.' He reckoned he was Hopkins' executor or some sort of agent or representative, but that Hopkins' wife or girlfriend didn't like his involvement. I took it with a pinch of salt."

Two Jonathan Bowdens

Adrian Davies informed me that there was not a shred of truth in the allegations. They were caused, claimed Davies, by the fact that another person called "Jonathan Bowden" had recently been found guilty of child pornography offences. In 1999, 30 year-old Jonathan Bowden of Ely, a lay clerk at Ely Cathedral and a freelance teacher at the Kings School in Ely, was found guilty of downloading and possessing various images of child pornography.[9] This had somehow come to light, suggested Davies, sparking the allegations against Bowden, despite the fact that the music teacher was clearly the wrong age to be the Jonathan Bowden who is the subject of this biography. Indeed, a comment by "Anonymous" on the *Lancaster Unity* report noted: "It looks as though some of the Griffin-Williams gang have (perhaps deliberately) confused Bowden with another individual of the same name who was convicted of paedophile offences in 1999. The paedophile Bowden is about seven years younger than the BNP Bowden."

However, the people who were involved in the smear did not mention this music teacher's conviction in their original article, insisting that this was just a coincidence. Their piece simply speculated that Bowden looked like a paedophile and might be one. According to the anti-Nick Griffin and pro-John Tyndall blog *Northwest Nationalists:*

> Another interesting issue that came out of this was the amount of people who seemed to have googled Bowden and apparently there was a paedophile with the same name which to be honest

> was just pure coincidence because the COVERT TEAM nor the person who originally wrote the article had done a search. However, the person who originally wrote the article did headline it "Does Jonathon Bowden look like a paedophile?" Because between him and Pete Rushton we wondered if they have a 'special' club this was actually changed to the word 'nonce' which has multiple meanings, one of which is because Pete Rushton has an effeminate side and as far as we are concerned he is a poof.[10]

So, there we have it.

Bowden's Return to the British National Party

Within a year, Bowden was back giving speeches at BNP events,[11] with the party magazine commenting on his "especially welcome reappearance" at the 2008 "Red, White and Blue" Festival.[12] This was an annual family event held by the BNP in a field. According to Griffin, Bowden had been a member of the BNP but had resigned from the party in 2007 due to the smear. He wanted to re-join but "he wanted his old membership number back." Griffin maintained that this was because, according to the party rules, you had to have been a member continuously for five years in order to stand for the leadership and Bowden had designs on so doing, just as Martin Webster had suspected.

"It would have been a disaster for him to run the party," Griffin observed, stressing that Bowden had no organisational abilities. Griffin refused to give Bowden his old membership number back so although Bowden continued as a speaker at party events he was not a member. Adrian Davies explained in his 2012 speech "The Untold Story of Jonathan Bowden" that, "My mother's obese cat Theodore has greater organisational abilities than JB."[13]

Understanding Bowden's Writing, Art, Fiction and Films

Bowden did indeed pursue his artistic endeavours, as he stated to Griffin that he would in his resignation letter. In 2009, he scripted, directed and produced a short film called *Grand Guignol*. Jack Antonio remarked on Bowden's films more generally that, "They were completely irrational and pathological. They reflected a lack of rational thought. There was lots of nudity; people romping in the woods; naked, in skins. There were his paintings in some of them; Jackson Pollock splatter. Everything was chaos and ugly. Yet he presented himself as a Classicist. It was like someone who claims to love Mozart but they play jazz."

I have found one detailed attempt to analyse the different forms of

Bowden's art; beginning with his paintings. Ian Nol, who calls himself a "starving artist," summarises Bowden's art as being "experimental, abstract and often aesthetically ugly." It is dominated by horrifically scarred faces, skull-like visages with their noses missing; a "pseudo-Cubist" style, such that the faces appear cut out of stone that is the colour of flesh, or there are faces with a nightmarish fractured-glass effect. In essence, Bowden was heavily influenced by Modernist Art, such as Picasso; but with a postmodern, chaotic tinge.[14]

With regard to Bowden's short stories and novellas, let us look at an example of how he wrote. Here are a few sentences of Bowden's fictional prose from his short story collection *Goodbye Homunculus!*

> In Hell, *per se*, a scrimmage has formed this side of desolation; it exists in front of a goal which served as a gibbet. A blackened waste lay in the rear—and it already tempted its greyness; if only to lie awake before this aperture. It took after one of those nets in Gaelic football; an area or zone that has an ice-cream salesman next to it. A bleary or incontinent cranium is seen; one which sends rivulets beyond an expectant spine. The game has momentarily paused . . . yet it will soon recommence without his observations. A wanton head looks up at the camera; and it feels dishevelled, broken off, toothsome or possessed of a withering brain.[15]

It is opaque, wordy, obscure stream-of-consciousness. As Eddy Butler has put it, Bowden's fiction reflected "an element of being the artistic poseur," of "trying too hard."[16] In slight contrast, Bowden's non-fiction writing style seemed to vary enormously in standard. Take the following, which is fairly representative of how he was writing in this early-40s:

> This, inter alia, leads on to a further rightist deconstruction of Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality*. For Ancient Greece's upper class poetics, *a la* Theognis, may have incorporated homo-eroticism . . . yet one has to ask what it means if half of Sappho's surviving staves concern men and family life. Like Enoch Powell's own chronicle and *Oeuvre*, does a disacknowledged or inactive bisexuality really matter if one's married with children? Perhaps one can take a leaf out of Dr William Pierce's book here. Given that the National Alliance's former leader forced all of its members to marry, on pain of expulsion, lest Kramer's postlapsarian snake intrude.[17]

The sentence structure is convoluted, particularly with "This, *inter alia*, leads on to a further rightist deconstruction . . ." The syntax makes it difficult for readers to follow the logic. References are woven into a loose structure, lacking smooth transitions between clauses, making it hard to track how ideas build on each other. Bowden's use of terms like "*inter alia*" and "disacknowledged" expresses a hyper-formal tone. While this vocabulary may feel sophisticated, it creates distance from the reader and is

overly obscure. The passage makes several unexplained references (e.g., Enoch Powell, Dr William Pierce,[18] Kramer's "postlapsarian snake"). For readers unfamiliar with these figures or terms, these references can feel alienating and it distracts from the main arguments. If these references are crucial, a brief explanation or smoother integration could keep readers engaged without requiring them to have prior knowledge.

Ideas jump abruptly, such as from Foucault to Ancient Greek poetics, to Sappho, then to bisexuality, and finally to Dr William Pierce. Without a clear transition between these ideas, the reader may struggle to see a coherent thread. For example, it is unclear how Sappho's poetry relates to Powell's "chronicle," or how bisexuality links to enforced marriage in the National Alliance. Explicitly connecting these ideas would help readers follow the line of argumentation. The writing style seems caught between academic analysis and polemic, especially with phrasing such as "rightist deconstruction" and "Kramer's postlapsarian snake." This blend of rhetorical tones can feel disjointed and renders it unclear what stance, if any, the writer is taking. In addition, there are fragmented and incomplete sentences. The sentence, "Given that the National Alliance's former leader forced all of its members to marry, on pain of expulsion, lest Kramer's postlapsarian snake intrude," is grammatically incomplete. Fragmented sentences like this can lose readers. In this case, a clearer sentence might explain why this forced marriage policy is relevant to the discussion.

On the other hand, Bowden's presentations, even when transcribed, are a riveting read and Bowden could evidently write extremely well even at the age of 18 when he produced the *New Right* pamphlet which we discussed above. Indeed, as we have seen, his first book, *Mad,* was, by any reasonable standard, well written. It is as though Bowden's writing fluctuated in style. On some days, he was a fluent writer; on others a verbose one. This change would be congruous with fluctuations in mood caused by, for example, paranoid schizophrenia or BPD. On a bad day, schizophrenics would have to deal with intrusive thoughts, obsessiveness (leading to unnecessary detail), a desire to express ineffably strong feelings (possibly leading to verbosity and a chaotic style) and may experience abnormal associations, possibly resulting in a disjointed and difficult style.[19] Similarly, if under stress, possibly resulting in the triggering of traumatic memories, BPD-suffers will become dysregulated, resulting in disorganized expressive

language.[20]

Nol avers that Bowden's fiction requires a great deal of effort. "His stories aren't told in a straightforward way. Each plot point is buried in paragraphs and paragraphs of descriptive prose that's at once vivid and abstract." In other words, the stories are convoluted and the writing is unnecessarily dense, peppered with all manner of eclectic references. Bowden's dialogue is, "Incredibly flowery, with comparisons to various obscure historical, political, and artistic figures." For Nol, Bowden's key influences seem to be a combination of horror, sci-fi and even fantasy genres. "Even if you manage to follow them, Bowden's stories won't be for everyone. They're demanding, dark, and rarely quick to get to the point." One is left asking, "At what point do we admit that Bowden wasn't a very good writer of fiction?" It is for this reason that even a politically-aligned publisher did not want to publish Bowden's fiction. Fascinatingly, Nol observes:

> Bowden's fictional works aren't perfect . . . In an interview where he was asked about *Mad*, Bowden said that the book probably contained errors since he wrote it 'straight out' when he was 18, suggesting that he didn't give it any serious edits or rewrites in the time since. It's quite possible that the rest of his fiction works were written similarly. Typed out in a flurry, then put on the shelf to be published all at once near the end of his life. If this is correct, it's hardly surprising these works have some rough edges.[21]

This is a crucial point. Serious writers, especially of fiction, draft and re-draft again and again; every word must justify itself, every sentence must work perfectly.

Nol also concedes that Bowden's films simply aren't very good. "Most of Bowden's stories seem pretty unfilmable, yet that didn't stop him from making films out of several of them." They are clearly made on a very small budget, they star Bowden himself (often acting comically, such as in *Venus Flytrap* when he watches a young woman swim naked and smiles at the camera in a lascivious fashion), people play multiple roles (indicated, for example, by a change in tie), we see the same mostly female acquaintances again and again, there are limited props and sets, there are very few special effects, and the camera work is that of a "home movie."[22] In his analysis of *Venus Flytrap,* in which a mad Nietzschean doctor decides to splice humans with mobile flesh-eating plants because he has come to despise human weakness, Nol observes that there is far too much dialogue without the necessary imagery, he implies that the dialogue is didactic (directly stating points to the viewer), that there is obvious symbolism (such

as a woman's scarf turning into a flower and her giving it to a male character or multiple women playing the same part to symbolise different aspects of her character), and that, in general, it is below the standard of a "student movie."[23]

> The results aren't particularly good movies in a conventional sense, but they are interesting and memorable in many ways, and they do have some quality lines, shots, and plot concepts. The main enjoyment I think normies might get out of them is watching Bowden hamming it up. The man tends to go absolutely crazy in his films, whether out of a desire to entertain the audience or because he enjoyed the catharsis.[24]

Growing Recognition as an Orator: Mr Bowden Goes to America

As well as making a film, Bowden also spoke at the BNP's summer festival "Red, White and Blue" in 2009, according to Eddy Butler and Mark Collett. One evening he "held a riveting reading of the legend of Beowulf."[25] He also conducted a question and answer session. Mark Collett first came to public attention when he was the chairman of the Young BNP while an Economics student at Leeds University. In 2002, there was a fly-on-the-wall *Dispatches* documentary about him called "Young, Nazi and Proud," in which he was covertly filmed making particularly politically incorrect remarks and duly resigned as Young BNP chairman.[26] Collett recalled that it was in question and answer sessions that Bowden was particularly "in his element. He loved sitting and talking about his views on life. He had an interesting take on everything . . . all unrehearsed . . . He thrived in that environment." Moreover, he was allowed to do this Q and A precisely because he "attracted a large following" and was a powerful and entertaining speaker.

Between 2009 and 2011, Bowden seemed to speak at most meetings of the New Right Forum, including on "Leon Degrelle and the Real Tintin" in April 2009, when the other speaker was David Irving, on "Punch and Judy" in November, and on Julius Evola in June 2010, just to give a few examples. In 2008, Bowden had attended a garden party of Irving's, where Irving launched his prison memoirs[27] relating to the period in which he had been in jail in Austria for Holocaust Denial.[28] In about the same year, Bowden's friend's British wife, Irena Galati (b. 1947), was with him at the Victory Services Club when she saw him merrily chatting to the businessman and journalist Darius Guppy (b. 1964). Guppy is an Old

Etonian who is friends with Boris Johnson and Princess Diana's brother the 9th Earl Spencer (b. 1964).[29] Jez Bedford-Turner informed Irena that Guppy and Bowden were friends and that he'd come to see him. Guppy did not respond to my request, via a mutual friend, to comment.

By October 2009, Bowden's recognition was such that he was flown to the United States to speak at a conference in Atlanta for writers for *The Occidental Quarterly,* then edited by Greg Johnson. Bowden was introduced to the podium by Jared Taylor (b. 1951). Bowden was effectively "hitting the big time," at least in these rather fringe, dissident conservative circles. Greg Johnson first met him shortly before the event: "Around his neck was a wooden pendant inscribed with an Odal rune. He asked me how I thought it would go over in Atlanta. I suggested that if anyone asked, he simply declare it to be the sign of the fish." Bowden showed Johnson water colours he had painted, one of "Adolf and Leni" and the other of Savitri Devi.

> On his own, he could be quiet and pensive. His face would take on an impassive mask-like quality, enlivened only by a penetrating, sometimes unsettling gaze. But when Jonathan had the right kind of audience, he would come alive, his face positively beaming with mirth. He had an endless supply of interesting stories, often told with hilarious impressions. He was one of the funniest, most brilliant, and most intellectually stimulating people I have ever known.[30]

The speech that Bowden delivered at that conference was, by all accounts, quite incredible. According to Johnson:

> ". . . when Jonathan took the stage, he swept aside the shrieky, malfunctioning microphone and filled a ballroom with his unamplified voice, speaking extemporaneously and fluently for two hours. Jonathan's speech that night was quite simply the greatest speech I had ever heard. He upstaged all of creation that day.

Jeff Costello described the speech merely as "funny and inspiring," but other reviews of it are far more in line with Johnson's. According to Alex Kurtagic, Bowden seemed nervous before the speech, knowing that future invitations depended on its success. However:

> What followed has since become part of American nationalist folklore . . . 'I HAVE A VERY LOUD VOICE,' he barked, filling the ballroom.
>
> Jonathan then hit the ground running, fast and hard, and orated for an hour. The intensity was electrifying. Everyone was paralysed. Had anyone not been too transfixed to look, not turned into a salt statue, he would have found jaws all over the floor. It felt like history being made. And who can remember what he said? Few would be able to tell you today. Something about dispelling the cloud. It doesn't matter. It's the way he said it that counts. It's the energy he expelled, and what it did to the audience, that was important. From that alone everyone knew how they needed to feel, what had to be done, and, most importantly, that whatever it was that

> had to be done *could* and *would* be done, without half-measures or apology. Jonathan received a standing ovation. Applause went on and on, for centuries, and is still going. And he stood there, sphinx like, the Iron Man, as if nothing.[31]

Adrian Davies laments the fact that this breath-taking speech, which he also witnessed, was not filmed. Jared Taylor runs *American Renaissance*. He was born in Japan, to missionary parents, and lived there until he was 16, then returning to his parents' native Virginia. Taylor read Philosophy at Yale and then Economics at Sciences Po in Paris and became a noted expert on Japan, which caused him to realise the importance of intelligence and homogeneity to a functioning society. He duly set up *American Renaissance,* to advocate for this, in 1990. Taylor recalled that he introduced Bowden at the meeting by referring to the joint press conferences that George W. Bush and Tony Blair used to do about the Iraq War, noting that Bush couldn't finish a sentence but Blair, in stark contrast, produced "well-formed" speeches. He did this to be "humorously modest" about himself but, "I discovered I had been spot on. He was one of the most powerful orators I have ever heard in my life. He had no notes. It was riveting. We were spellbound."

Adrian Davies and Bowden travelled with Taylor to Key West in Florida. Davies recalled that Bowden simply couldn't cope with the heat, not least because all he had to wear was "dark, English winter clothes;" mainly suits. This left him immobile, reading by the pool all day, until some appropriate attire was purchased for him.

Bowden's Growing Paranoia

Eddy Butler recalled that by roughly 2010, he was noticing odd patterns of behaviour in his friend. Together with his suit, Bowden started to wear steel-tipped, workmen's boots to use as an effective weapon should he be attacked. Butler also remembered that during this time, Bowden's unhappiness meant that, "There were more and more conversation no-go zones; more and more subjects he'd have a collapse over." Greg Johnson recalled that by October 2009, Bowden already owned a samurai sword, as he used a Samurai sword box to carry the paintings of his which he brought to America.

Peter Rushton averred that, even in 2010, Bowden may have been receiving threatening phone calls from the people involved in "Covert Undercover Nuisance Tactics" because, so he claimed, this had happened to

him, due to his being a supporter of Tyndall, who had ambitions to resume the party leadership, and an opponent of Griffin's. "It'd get you down," he explained "when it's from within your own movement. You can see what it would do to someone who was more vulnerable to that type of pressure. You get ground down by it. I had shingles, which is stress-related." Rushton informed me that, "I heard that Bowden had been undergoing this kind of treatment. It struck me that it would contribute to the paranoia."

Bowden's Breakdown

Bowden delivered one of his regular speeches to the New Right Forum in October 2010, on Savitri Devi.[32] He did not speak again until June 2011. This gap of nine months was caused by his having had a serious mental breakdown. *Searchlight* reported in January 2011 that Bowden was due to speak at the *American Renaissance* conference in Charlotte, North Carolina, in February 2011.[33] However, Jared Taylor informed me that the conference was cancelled. Taylor asserted that even though they explained the nature of the conference to the hotel owners, they suddenly cancelled at the last minute, claiming to be shocked by the conference's "racism." In reality, they were under pressure from left-wing activists and politicians.[34] Bowden declined to attend the "rump meeting" which replaced the conference.

In late January 2011, Michael Woodbridge remembered that he had taken Bowden to Market Harborough to see his father. A few days after this, explained Eddy Butler, Bowden turned up at the house of Lady Michèle Renouf and "went berserk. He was hearing voices, he was convinced that there were people after him and Renouf and Peter Rushton returned to a room to find Bowden clutching a Samurai sword. He left in a hurry and was picked up by the police in Reading, semi-naked, still holding the sword." Bowden was involuntarily sectioned[35] and placed in a psychiatric hospital in Reading. Peter Rushton remembered Sharon Ebanks telephoning him to inform him of this.

Renouf has a different recollection, which is, naturally, far more detailed. She was living in a three bedroom maisonette in South Kensington. It belonged to Dr James Thring (b. 1943), a left-wing Holocaust Revisionist[36] who has spoken at an event hosted by former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn,[37] who confirmed to Michael Woodbridge via telephone that she was living there at the time. Bowden, whom Renouf had known since 2009,

telephoned her and said he'd heard through his "party wall" (a parting wall between two adjacent properties) that people were planning to kill him. He asked Renouf if he could come and stay with her and she agreed. "I had no difficulty believing it might be possible," she stated. "All political people are at risk of a lunatic who wants to do harm to them," with the noted Holocaust revisionist[38] having found discussions online of sending her ricin in a get-well-soon card. Peter Rushton was also staying with Renouf at the time.

On about 25th January, Bowden arrived holding a samurai sword and a machete and stayed for about a week. Rushton recalled that even on the first night, "we knew something else was going on. He was hearing voices that he couldn't possibly hear; people whispering in the mews behind the house. It wasn't physically possible for him to hear them whispering to each other." On 29th January, Bowden drew up a will, typing it out on Renouf's computer. He commenced the will in an old-fashioned manner, asserting that he was "of sound mind and good judgement" and, unusually, ended it by reiterating this: "I was in sound mind and compos mentis when I did so" (submitted the will). Rushton and Renouf acted as witnesses. Rushton also recalled that the will made clear that Bowden's address was a caravan, something about which he'd previously been secretive: "He was perfectly frank about his circumstances."

Thereafter, Bowden's behaviour became ever more concerning. He would ring friends from the house, such as Michael Woodbridge and Adrian Davies. The latter informed me that Bowden's "speech was rambling and he displayed paranoid and delusional beliefs that he was under constant observation by agents of an unnamed foreign power." He also emailed Greg Johnson about what was supposedly happening to him. Bowden explained to Davies that there were agents of this foreign power in the flat above Renouf's "carrying out Stasi-type surveillance with listening devices." Bowden "needed to have a Samurai sword to hand in order to defend himself against an imminent assassination attempt. JB had plainly gone completely mad."

According to Renouf, "Every night he'd be waving the machete and the sword. He'd also call the police at night and they'd come. He did this three times." The police investigated and found that he had no "party wall," because he lived in a caravan, "so he was deluded." With this information,

“The police said that they would only come if I rang them and that I was in a very dangerous situation because if I didn’t ring the police, I was standing in the way of him protecting himself. They wanted me to have him sectioned.” Renouf didn’t want to do this because she thought it would “damage his political career.” On the last night he was there, right at the beginning of February, Renouf had an event to go to and Rushton went out shopping. Upon his return, he found an agitated Bowden holding the Samurai sword and he invited him to tell him what the problem was over a cup of tea. Rushton had no memory of a “party wall” ever being mentioned. Later that night, Bowden “ran up and down the stairs three times wielding the Samurai sword and the machete. Eventually, he called a taxi and left. Peter Rushton “slept through the whole thing. He never even woke up!” The next day, according to Rushton, Bowden politely said, “I’m going now. Thank you for the hospitality.” Renouf could not understand why Bowden was so embarrassed about living in a caravan, “It fitted with his theatrical personality,” she remarked.

Butler recalled visiting Bowden in the psychiatric hospital and Bowden telling him: “They’re over there. They’re in the bush over the road. They’re telling me they’re going to get me.” One day, in about March 2011, Butler and Sharon Ebanks were allowed, by the hospital, to take Bowden for lunch in a pub in a village called Sonning in Berkshire called The Bull, a pub described in the 1889 humorous novel *Three Men in a Boat.*[39] Sonning was also home to future Prime Minister Theresa May (b. 1956), the local MP.[40] Butler, Ebanks and Bowden, having dined at The Bull, walked past the churchyard and Bowden suddenly remarked: “They are there!” According to Butler, “he’d have these lapses and you’d say to him, ‘No, there are no voices’ and he’d admit it, embarrassed, and say, ‘Yes, yes . . .’” After his breakdown he “lacked passion.” Butler recalled leaving him at the hospital and a broken Bowden, who was extremely “down,” sighing, “I’m mad, aren’t I?” “He waved like a child being sent away to boarding school. The whole thing was so sad.”

Michael Woodbridge recollected that Bowden rang him saying that he was “surrounded by people who wanted to kill him and could I come and rescue him.” These people were the perplexed Lady Michèle Renouf and Peter Rushton. When he was sectioned, Bowden was, according to Woodbridge, “diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. He was happy about that, ‘Ah, just like Nietzsche!’ he said.” It should be noted that there is some dispute over

whether Nietzsche suffered from paranoid schizophrenia or some other form of psychotic illness, possibly derived from bipolar disorder; that is manic depression, or even something far more unusual.[41]

Finally telling Woodbridge his address, Bowden asked him to go to his mobile home and fetch his paintings: "I wasn't allowed to take his art into the hospital and so most of it remains in my attic. The state of his home came as a bit of a shock. Although Jonathan was always personally clean and well turned out, his home even had holes in the floor where the wood had rotted away."

By 10th April 2011, Bowden was emailing Eric Galati, in response to the latter's concerns with Galati having read on the *Stormfront* website that Bowden had been sectioned:

> I have a chemical imbalance in my brain which has led to schizophrenia and is now being treated by a drug called rispiridone . . . It seems to have worked (after a period) and the present diagnosis is that the symptoms will not recur if I continue to have a *depot* injection from a psychiatric nurse for the next six months, two years, maybe forever. It appears that once stability has been reached you can lead a totally normal life—as long as you continue to have these injections. (Note: it's rather like being a diabetic, albeit in a totally distinct area of healthcare.) It's very unfortunate—to say the least—but there appears to be little more that I can do in the present circumstances than adopt a Stoical attitude and carry on. As I say, with the exception of these injections and a bit of attendant bureaucracy, my life is unchanged. No-one who met me in an occasional way would go away with the impression that I'm 'insane.'

It should be noted that rispiridone, which is used to treat schizophrenia and the mood swings common to bipolar disorder and related conditions, is specifically not supposed to be taken by people with heart problems,[42] so it would seem that Bowden's heart disease was undiagnosed. Eventually, Bowden was moved out of his mobile home and placed in social housing, specifically at 34 Kestrel's Mead, a small red-brick house in Tadley, which is in Aldermaston, home to the Atomic Weapons Establishment, about eight miles from Reading. "He seemed happy there. I remember I phoned him and he said, 'I've got to go now. There are some children who want me to go out and play with them," Woodbridge told me. But ". . . he displayed increasingly paranoid tendencies. For instance, when we left his new council supplied home after his more obvious breakdown he would insist on checking and rechecking, beyond all reason, that he had properly locked his property."

Once Bowden was sectioned, it gradually became clear to his closest friends that his wife Karen was a complete fabrication, as were the children.

Many of them were stunned to realise this, but it made sense of why they had never met her and why he never had guests over to his home. William Lee told Eric Galati in November 2011 that he didn't believe Bowden was married. Jack Antonio had always thought the marriage was nonsense as Bowden simply didn't resonate as a family man. He also quickly concluded that Bowden was "insane" upon meeting him. Senior BNP members clearly knew he wasn't married as they referred to him as a "bachelor" in the party magazine in 2001, as we saw earlier.[43] Nick Griffin told me that he'd always assumed Bowden was unmarried: "He just didn't seem like the marrying type." Bowden, moreover, wasn't consistent with his pretend marriage, having told Father Frank Gelli that he lived with his father.

A Different Person

By 11th June 2011, when he returned to the New Right Forum to give a speech on Ezra Pound,[44] Bowden had changed. Not only had he lost a great deal of weight, but one of his hands was shaking; likely a side-effect of the powerful anti-psychotics he was taking. Matt Tait recalled that, "He was not the same person. His voice was slow and weak. He wasn't his real self. At the London Forum, his performance wasn't the same. There was something 'not quite Jonathan' about him." Arthur Kemp agreed: "I met him twice after he'd been sectioned. He was drugged-up. He was deadpan. He was not the same person." "He was never the same after the breakdown. He was very distant," commented Mick Brooks. "He was on medication. It was like the real him couldn't break through. He'd lost his fire. His later speeches were as fascinating as ever but they were serious; they were lacking his trademark humour and oratorical brilliance."

The Croatian diplomat Tomislav Sunic first met Bowden in 2006 when he was Minister-Counsellor at the Croatian Embassy in London. They went for coffee or dinner a number of times where they discussed Nietzsche, Chesterton and other thinkers. Though a diplomat, Sunic was a nationalist and had a "margin of manoeuvre" while Croatia's nationalist leader during its War of Independence between 1991 and 1992, Franjo Tuđman (1922–1999), was in power, which he was until 1999. Eventually, Sunic was withdrawn from London, by Croatia's left wing government, due to his contacts with men such as Bowden: "My private adventures were not quite in line with the official business of Croatian diplomacy," he told me. However, he returned many times as a private citizen and both he and

Bowden were speakers at the 11th New Right meeting in London on 8th September 2007 where Sunic spoke on "Americanism and Anti-Americanism: A View from Western and Post-Communist Eastern Europe."[45] Sunic had acknowledged Bowden's assistance with his book *Homo Americanus* which had been published in the same year.[46] When Sunic met Bowden in London in about 2011 he remembered that, "He was very much down. There was depression in his face."

In late February 2012, Bowden returned to the US, for a week, now a source of fascination for American nationalists such as Greg Johnson of Counter-Currents who invited him, conducting an interview with him on 26th February in San Francisco. Johnson also discussed Bowden in his *The White Nationalist Manifesto,* noting that Bowden had described Western Society as a "left-wing oligarchy;" a system with enormous political and economic problems which tries to cover these up by forcing people to piously mouth "Left-wing slogans."[47] Even in Santa Cruz, Bowden continued with his fantasy according to Jef Costello, one of the writers who met him at the Counter-Currents event.

> I asked him whether he was married. He said that he was, and that his wife had been a schoolteacher. I inquired further, but received only very short, monosyllabic responses and a lot of awkward silence. Oddly, I can't find any mention of his having been married in any of the sources I've looked at.

Before his speech at the Counter-Currents conference, Bowden informed Costello that he had no idea what he was going to talk about. Referring to his style of speech as "mediumistic," he would read the audience and feed off them. Costello recalled that this speech was nowhere close to the "inspiring" speech that Bowden had delivered in Atlanta in 2009.[48]

Richard Spencer (b. 1978), an American activist credited with coining the term "Alt-Right," had been conducting a series of interviews with Bowden on his internet show *Vanguard* between about December 2011 and March 2012, such as on 7th March 2012 when they discussed Mitt Romney's success in the primaries the previous day. Simon Darby had heard that Bowden was deeply unhappy at this point, concerned that his "talent wouldn't be recognised" and "his life had no purpose," though the source of information denies that Bowden had said this to him. Eddy Butler told me that their relationship became strained after Bowden's breakdown:

> He shrunk away from me as he knew (or thought he knew) I regarded the afflicted as weeds and

> not worthy of consideration and even, perhaps life. That is ironically in accord with his espoused world vision, his world outlook—which he expressed to me countless times in our trips around the country and which I largely theoretically agreed with (although in practice I am much more understanding and 'liberal') and in conversation he would trash virtually everyone he met afterwards (nor absolutely everyone) and point out their manifest shortcomings, and as a visceral misanthrope I'd agree and that would take up hours of chatting. So naturally our relationship became difficult . . . although I wasn't actually bothered by his flaws—he assumed I think that I'd be despising him.

Eric Galati last saw Bowden in October 2011 when he came to Reading and took Bowden for dinner at a Portuguese restaurant. "He was gentle and quiet, like a child," Gelati recalled. "He asked, 'Can I have dessert?' and I said, 'Of course you can, Jonathan.' 'Cake?'" he asked, plaintively. Galati then took him to Oxfam, a charity shop, where Bowden replaced his lost copy of the novel *Under the Volcano,*[49] and then to a pub close to Reading Railway Station. His eyes were glassy, as though he was on too much medication, and he kept reaching for his left hand, potentially implying a heart problem. Bowden remarked, speaking very softly, that, "I really like English people. There's an art to being English." Galati asked after Bowden's fictional wife and children and he glumly responded, "They're away. They've gone elsewhere. I'm on my own here." "He did fantasise but none of them were harmful. It was an artistic creation he created for his life. There was a profound sadness in his life," remarked Galati. "It's as if he saw people as characters in his own vast novel."

In early March 2012, there was an informal meeting at the Victory Services Club attended by various people involved in the London Forum. Jack Antonio found Bowden "wandering around in the basement mumbling to himself. He was just walking around, aimlessly. He was off with the fairies . . . He was descending. He was not happy."

Bowden's Final Speech

Peter Rushton met Bowden in early 2012 after his release from hospital. He remembered Bowden bounding over and remarking, "I'm a lot better now, Peter. I'm sorted out now. I'm a lot better." Bowden's London Forum lecture on "Charles Maurras, *Action Francaise* and the Cagoule,"[50] on Saturday 24th March 2012, just five days before he died, was interrupted by the police because the owners of the Fountain's Abbey had been threatened by left-wing activists. The police asked them to leave the booked room but they managed to immediately find a free room, by pure luck, at the Victory

Services Club, a club for old soldiers on Seymour Street which they could use because one of the attendees was a member. According to Mick Brooks, leftists had threatened:

> to fire-bomb the place if the talk went ahead. Needless to say, this the police blamed the attendees of the meeting rather than investigate these threats and asked us to leave. We went for a beer in the Victory Services Cub whilst deciding what to do and somebody had the bright idea to ask a member of staff there. Luckily they had a spare lecture theatre that (maybe due to a cancellation?) they rented out for a fraction of the normal price (£100, or so).

Former National Front activist turned "Anti-Fascist" Matthew Collins (b. 1972)—his conversion likely reflecting the way that those who have high Neuroticism in certain forms (such as Borderline Personality) can undergo dramatic identity changes[51]—reported that the "Hope Not Hate Team" had found out about the meeting and sat in Fountains Abbey pub "blogging and keeping an eye on" their opponents. They'd managed to block the London Forum's mobile number. "Antifascists," implicitly distinct from Hope Not Hate, turned up at the pub demanding the London Forum be removed and generally causing a scene and the landlord called the police. In other words, intimidation was used to shut down a lawful meeting.

Accusing them of being Nazis and Hitler-worshippers, and using the most ostentatiously emotive language about free-speech advocates never having been at the gates of Auschwitz, Collins gloated that: "Down in London, as a crestfallen Jonathan Bowden (formerly of BNP fame) stood miserably in the street and a collection of European fascists mingled with angry English skinheads, 'Jez' Turner was desperately trying to save face in front of his European guests and find another venue."[52] This meeting was also independently infiltrated by *Searchlight* mole and Croydon BNP activist Duncan Robertson (1964-2013), with *Searchlight* and Hope Not Hate having splintered in 2011,[53] with the two groups evidently disliking each other.[54] Robertson had, it seems, been a mole in both the New Right Forum and in the London Forum from the very beginning. Certainly, he was already working for *Searchlight* by 2006.[55] In contrast to Collins' recollection, Julian Leppert recalled that, on the evening of 24th March 2012, Bowden was back to his usual "funny, cheery self. The BNP was imploding and we talked about the Front National and how well they were doing, because it was more uplifting. He seemed fine to me; good fun. It was devastating when he died a few days later. I couldn't believe it. He was

healthy and hearty just a few days before."

Bowden's Death

Bowden died of a heart attack in his sleep at home in Tadley on 29th March 2012, two weeks before his 50th birthday. He died at 49; his mother died at 48, both seemingly suffering from paranoid schizophrenia and both succumbing to heart disease.

On 7th April 2012, Bowden was advertised to speak at the New Right Forum on the topic "The Anarch in Ernst Jünger's System of Thought." Peter Rushton, who was scheduled to speak at the same meeting, remembered that Troy Southgate was notified on 5th April that Bowden would not be speaking because Bowden's father was critically ill. In reality, of course, it was Jonathan Bowden himself who was dead.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Victorious in Eternity: Life After Death

> Life is something that must be overcome again and again. To live—is that not precisely to want to be other than this life? Respect for those who die in the struggle and those who are victorious in eternity!
>
> F. W. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.[1]

A Pauper's Funeral

Bowden was cremated in a council funeral at West Berkshire Crematorium in Thatcham on 1st May 2012. A council funeral used to be called a pauper's funeral. This meant that Bowden had no assets, so the Local Authority paid for the funeral, with it being conducted by an undertaker rather than a vicar.

Bowden's will, made on 29th January 2011, bequeathed all of Bowden's belongings—including his caravan, his paintings, his unpublished writings and the rights to his books—to Michael Woodbridge, whom he also made his executor. However, it did not bequeath Woodbridge any savings which Bowden might have had. Bowden's estate, meaning the caravan, was valued at less than £1,000. Due to Bowden's failure to write a will with regard to his savings, it was originally believed that he had died intestate. Consequently, there was an administration, in 2013, in which his estate, valued at less than £12,000, was left to his next-of-kin. When he died, this would have been his father, so the estate passed to his step-mother. Thus, although Bowden had sufficient assets to cover his funeral expenses, he had made no arrangements for his funeral and his father was seemingly seriously ill and unable to organise it. A pauper's funeral was the result.

Michael Woodbridge did not immediately publicise Bowden's death because Bowden's father was seriously ill in hospital and there was concern he would die of shock. There was also concern that leftists would start writing unpleasant things about Bowden online and it appears that Bowden's family were unhappy about the possibility of many people from the extreme right attending the funeral. For all of these reasons, it wasn't until 25th April, around a month after Bowden's death, that many of his

friends even discovered that Bowden had passed away, as the information was slowly spread. Woodbridge had told Jacqueline Laing, she had told David Oderberg, he had told Stead Steadman, who in turn told Eric Galati and so on. The delay had an obvious consequence, as Michael Woodbridge explained: "I do recall asking the funeral director whether I could see his body as a way of paying my last respects and was told that I could but it was not advisable because it was in a state of decomposition."

Many emails were exchanged among a group of Bowden's friends and it was realised that there would be no church service, no formal wake and not even a vicar, because Bowden's family were concerned about the extreme right turning up and had also decided not to even attend the funeral for this reason, according to Eric Galati. Funerals are public events in England so various friends decided that they would simply turn up, whether formally told of the funeral or not. The funeral director effectively conducted an Anglican funeral including the Lord's Prayer and Psalm 23. About 25 people attended. Mick Brooks remembered that on one side of the aisle there were a few people, such as the man who ran Bowden's local newsagents, and on the other side were various political friends. As was his wish, Bowden was cremated.

Matt Tait explained that because Michael Woodridge, who was supposed to do the eulogy, was held up in traffic with Jez Bedford-Turner, he ended-up adlibbing it himself. "I talked about how I was inspired by his orations, that he was a great raconteur, that he did brilliant impressions of characters with distinct voices, and I talked about his laugh." Tait also commented that more important than having one's name carved on stone is to have one's memory carved into people's hearts. William Lee then got up and spoke and finally Woodbridge and Bedford-Turner arrived and the latter spoke briefly. Siegfried's Funeral March from Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* was then played for 15 minutes and Bowden's coffin disappeared to be cremated. The mourners then made their way to the Bladebone Inn in Chapel Row, a hamlet where Kate Middleton (b. 1982) lived until she got married.

A Prize and an Obituary

For years afterwards, friends would meet at a pub in Peppard, where Bowden grew up, on Bowden's birthday to honour him. A mulberry tree was planted there in his memory by Michael Woodbridge, Matt Tait, Stead Steadman and others. Then the Jonathan Bowden Oratory Prize was

established by the London Forum for the person regarded as the best nationalist speaker in a given year. Alex Kurtagic won this in 2014,[2] former BNP National Organiser Richard Edmonds (1943–2020) won it in 2015,[3] proscribed National Action co-founder Alex Davies (b. 1995) won the prize in 2016,[4] and Jez Bedford-Turner was awarded the prize in 2017,[5] after which the London Forum was wound up.

Damian Thompson felt sufficiently strongly about Bowden to risk praising him in his *Daily Telegraph* column, despite the hysteria in the UK about the "far right" and about Bowden's party in particular. In a short piece entitled "A gift wasted on boneheads," Thompson explained that he was very upset to have learned of the death of the prominent BNP member Jonathan Bowden. He elaborated that they were at school together and that Bowden was "one of the most gifted intellectuals I've ever met." Unfortunately, continued Thompson perceptively, Bowden could not "discipline his brilliant mind" and he lacked the "social skills" to be able to socialise with "ordinary people." According to Thompson, Bowden could "orate dazzlingly" on numerous obscure issues but could only obtain the recognition he craved by joining or creating fringe groups. Thompson added that Bowden could explain Heidegger to the masses but the "masses weren't listening." Thus, "Jonathan suffered the fate of so many extremist intellectuals, wasting his gifts on boneheads in pubs. He would despise this cliché, but may his troubled spirit rest in peace."

When I asked Thompson why he wrote the article, he replied that: "I was fond of him. I knew he wasn't a serious racist. I was distraught. I was upset; I still am a little bit upset. He wasn't a nasty person. He was troubled, and he was capable of affection, though he found it hard to show it. I was always aware he'd been tremendously damaged by his mother's death."

The Biography That Never Was

Almost as soon as Bowden died, his friend Alex Kurtagic announced that he would research Bowden's biography. According to Eric Galati, Kurtagic wrote to him about the project on 22nd July 2012. In 2017, Kurtagic stated that he was still working on a biography of Bowden,[6] which he referred to as "forthcoming" in an introduction to a reprint of one of Bowden's books.[7] Kurtagic told me that he was still writing it when I wrote to him in 2019, due to people having approached me to write it. He told me that he was still

writing it, that he'd known Bowden in his later years, and that his account dealt extensively with Bowden's psychology and background.

Kurtagic was once more claiming to be researching Bowden's biography in 2021. When Michael Woodbridge and I contacted Kurtagic on 28th September 2024 to see if he was actually writing it and, if not, if I could interview him, Kurtagic did not reply. Naturally, this prevarication-caused delay is extremely frustrating as it has meant that memories have been lost, sources have died, and living sources have become more reticent in the freedom-chilling Woke climate that has worsened so much since 2012. Nevertheless, the immediate call for a biography of Bowden when he died is a testimony to the way in which he influenced people; to his cult following even at that stage.

A Cult Internet Figure

But it was after Bowden's death, with the gradual release of his speeches onto YouTube, that Bowden began to become increasingly well-known in broader "based" and even academic circles. By the end of 2012, an academic was emailing people who had known Bowden, such as Troy Southgate, to obtain information about Bowden for a chapter on the "cultic milieu" of "Britain's New Right."[8] In 2016, according to a report in the *Reading Chronicle,* a road on a new estate in the Southcote area of Reading, on the site of Bowden's demolished secondary school, was named after a long-time councillor who had died two years earlier. Surprisingly, "Other names chosen during the Wednesday, July 20 planning committee meeting of Reading Borough Council, include Bowden, in honour of political philosopher and Elvian School alumnus Jonathan Bowden. . . "[9] There is now a "Bowden Row" in Reading.

In 2019, a former nationalist activist called Tom Clements wrote a piece for the left-wing *Independent* entitled "I fell down the rabbit hole of alt-right propaganda and this is what I learned," implying that the world of the Alt-Right is a surreal dream world akin to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. But he was even more specific about the most important figure within Wonderland: "During a period of depression, I was strangely drawn to the oratory of British polemicist Jonathan Bowden—but then I came to understand the real reason he held such extreme views."[10]

During Clements' period of depression, which was so severe that he could not leave the house, he began by watching the polemicist Paul Joseph

Watson, and then Stefan Molyneux, before moving on to Greg Johnson and then Richard Spencer. "Yet it wasn't these two Americans that grabbed my attention. It was an obscure figure named Jonathan Bowden."

"British-born Bowden is regarded by many in alt-right circles to have been among our nation's greatest ever orators. An autodidact who spoke with extraordinary loquacity about historical figures with extreme rightist sensibilities . . . Bowden was—and still is—a cult internet figure. His unwavering conviction that inequality is a social good, that "liberalism is moral syphilis," and that white people ought to be able to assert themselves as culturally, ethnically and psycho-spiritually superior are influential to this day."

Clements speculated on how Bowden's worldview was formed as a reaction to a mentally ill mother who died when he was young and that fact that, according to Clements, "On camera, he cut a rather pathetic figure who, with his diminutive physique and ill-fitting suits, he looked totally out of place in rooms filled by the BNP crowd of burly white men." Clements added that, "In Bowden's case, his fanaticism did not go beyond the small obscure pub venues in which he delivered entrancing but ultimately hollow speeches." But, of course, the very fact that Clements was even writing his article about Bowden meant that it most certainly had done. In the same year, Bowden's influence was discussed in a volume entitled *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right,* especially with regard to his influence on Greg Johnson.[11]

Nick Griffin told me that in about 2021 he was "deluged" with requests to "release the Bowden tapes" of BNP event speeches by Bowden, in the hands of others by then, that were yet to be made public. "There was such a demand for them, from a new generation of middle class, nationalist youngsters." The people who worked for "BNP TV," and recorded the speeches, are now part of Mark Collett's pressure group Patriotic Alternative. The organisation is gradually restoring, editing and releasing the recordings. Greg Johnson set up the Jonathan Bowden Archive, of his speeches and writings, in 2022 to mark the tenth anniversary of Bowden's death.

Syd Bowmaker was convinced that if Bowden had been alive during the age of social media—which Bowden narrowly missed in that by 2012 only 48 per cent the UK population were using social media platforms[12]—then he would have been an internet celebrity while still alive. "With his

expertise on the history of Northern Europe, the great things we've done as a people, that we shouldn't be ashamed . . . his oratory style was captivating . . . He could have been a sensation and far better known than he is. Far right groups are frequently using clips from his speeches on social media." Matt Tait remarked that Bowden is "very meme-able."

The Secret Neo-Dandyist Conference

In late August 2024, I spoke at a conference of a group called The Witan alongside, among others, Carl Benjamin (b. 1979), known as "Sargon of Akkad," and Dr Neema Parvini, whom we met earlier. The organisers were in their twenties and thirties and most of the attendees were likewise. I was astonished by how young most of them were, by how many young women there were, and how almost all the ones to whom I spoke were university graduates.[13] For example, one of the speakers was Elizabeth Heverin (b. 2002) who, as an undergraduate three years earlier, had been banned from Aberdeen University Student Union buildings for writing "Rule Britannia!" in a Zoom call student council meeting, in response to a foreign student praising what Britain had achieved internationally. This allusion to a canonical patriotic song was apparently "racist or discriminatory language."[14] The Witan conference provocatively took place at Warwick University, with the Woke student newspaper realising this far too late and it, anyway, not being term time.[15]

I spoke to young architects, solicitors, engineers and even the daughter of a vicar. Among the men, as noted at the New Right Forum, there was a *de facto* dress code of blazers and ties; a kind of "chap" look; young fogies with even a few pipe smokers, bowties and cravats. In other words, they were dressed as Jonathan Bowden dressed when he was that age. The young women dressed traditionally, in dresses or skirts, and also tended to be anti-feminist; believing that women should adopt traditional roles where possible. They probably would have agreed with Bowden's summary of the leading feminist Andrea Dworkin (1946–2005),[16] supposedly quoted from memory from Bill Hopkins: "Andrea Dworkin is a fat, ugly, obese, obscene, arrogant, ex-hooker, quasi-lesbian, and Jewish nutter that we shouldn't listen to!" Bowden was fascinated by physiognomy and would have found Dworkin fascinating accordingly.[17]

The attendees' clothing said everything: a kind of Romantic

traditionalism; a defanged 1950s, revived without the polio; aesthetically offending Woke sensibilities and more than happy to do so. Bowden encouraged his listeners to learn from the success of the left, as noted earlier. Here I saw the kind of "Anarcho-Dandyism" as set out in a tongue-in-cheek way in the 2001 book *The Chap Manifesto,* "a call to charms," a "Tweed Revolution," attempting to subvert contemporary "vulgarity" by dressing and behaving in an ostentatiously 1950s fashion.[18] *The Chap* is influenced by the Situationist International, insomuch as it creates a spectacle and deliberately fosters moments of reawakening, such as the Chap Olympiad in which ludicrous sports, such as umbrella jousting, are enjoyed. Clearly, it is subverting the current system using the surreal; it is influenced by Dadaism and a focus on the absurd, but for radical conservative ends.[19]

Bowden was fascinated by Situationism and discussed it in his lecture "H. P. Lovecraft: Aryan Mystic."[20] H. P. Lovecraft (1890–1937), a writer of fantasy and Gothic short stories who was also strongly nationalistic, like Bowden, was little-known in his lifetime, was an autodidact, had little money, was something of a dandy, and died in his late-forties.[21] Related to *The Chap* is a group called "The New Sheridan Club." This operates as a kind of tongue-in-cheek early twentieth century London gentleman's club, though it meets in a pub called The Wheatsheaf in Fitzrovia, formerly frequented by George Orwell among other notables. The New Sheridan Club is motivated by, in the words of a leading member, "a fondness for, I suspect, the security of the past. You know, the days when men would doff their hats to each other and smoke their pipes."[22] As we saw earlier, Bowden was involved with Romantia, whose worldview was, though far more serious and esoteric, similar to that of *The Chap.* Indeed, in 2019, Miss Martindale wrote an article for *The Chap.*[23] In January 2011, the London Forum committee announced to its audience that it was organising a trip to go and see a play about the Regency dandy Beau Brummell (1778-1840) being staged by the New Sheridan Club.[24]

Bowden certainly liked dressing up in old fashioned, formal clothes. Steadman recalled that, "a party of six or seven of us, in full evening dress, or as full as each person was able to muster, attended *Parsifal* at the London Coliseum." This is exactly the kind of ostentatious public display of traditionalism encouraged by the Confederacy of Anarcho-Dandyists

(CAD), as chaps jokingly call their movement. Bowden's friend Syd Bowmaker, who was with him at Wagner's opera, told me that when he was 15, Bowmaker was living with prostitutes in squats in Camden Town, taking heroin and was a punk rocker in a band called "The Demons;" "Demon," coincidentally, being a word Bowden used to refer to himself.[25] One day, Bowmaker decided to reject this way of life completely and has been a dandy ever since; a kind of Proto-Chappist Conversion. Even so, Bowden used to refer to Bowmaker—who enjoys the "potential violence" of running a rough pub on Anglesey where everyone "hates English people" such as him—as "the uncivilized version of him."

The attendees at the Witan combined Traditional Catholics (most of them converts to a highly conservative form of Catholicism), High Anglicans and intellectual Pagans of a Jonathan Bowden-kind. There was an African-American man, dressed in a chap-like fashion, a British Indian in an old-fashioned cap, and a half-Congolese-half-Belgian young fellow following the dress code and smoking a pipe. However, there were also assorted ex-BNP members, ex-UKIP members, Reform Party campaigners, and a few working class young men with tattoos. At this conference, however, there were a large array of "based books" on sale and I noticed that many of the attendees purchased the slim volume *Why I Am Not a Liberal* by Jonathan Bowden.[26]

The fact that so many attendees at the Witan were young and educated implied the beginning of a rebellion against the extreme leftism in which they'd been raised. This meeting was semi-secret and edgy; everything the left once was. Also, having been raised with the destruction wrought by Wokeness—Muslim grooming gangs, the collapse of law and order, and mentally ill young girls permitted to sterilise themselves in the name of "equality" and "sensitivity"—they no longer accepted that to be "far right" was "immoral." Bowden argued in *Why I Am Not A Liberal* that you can make the young interested in his ideas:

> By making it exciting, by making it the oppositional force within the culture, by saying that it's no longer the Left, that the Left has died . . . All that culture. Marching with your fist in the air at Essex University. All that sort of stuff. It's all over now, and any energy of opposition will come from the other side . . . But there are two things that can't be absorbed [*by Liberalism*]: the extreme Right and religious fundamentalism, as it's called, can't be absorbed. Those two can't be absorbed. Everything revolves around that, and that makes them very exciting, of course, sometimes for the wrong reasons. More people will come forward when it becomes the normal oppositional current. But what will change the view isn't fashionability, and isn't

> accessibility, it's morality. For a significant proportion of the generations born after the Second World War, radical Right-wing positions, they believe, are instinctually immoral . . . If you can break through that barrier the idealism of the young and others is there for you, but I don't think you'll get large numbers of people until that happens.

I was driven back to London by two of these youngish chaps. Then, some days later, there I was in a central London pub with a young journalist and philosopher slightly gingerly but proudly revealing to me that she had a book of Jonathan Bowden speeches in her handbag. But I'm left asking the same question: What was it about Bowden?

The Shaman of the New Right

Peter Rushton remarked to me that, "Bowden became a character who could hold an audience. In a shamanic sense, he tapped into a deep well of Englishness, drawing upon a lifetime of reading and conversation. He was the ultimate charismatic." In anthropology, the shaman figure is central to the tribe. As Romanian anthropologist Mircea Eliade (1907–1986) argued, the shaman enters a state of ecstasy in which he appears possessed by the spirits but yet able to master them.[27] Often he is unmarried and childless and he seems to have serious mental health problems, most obviously dimensions of paranoid schizophrenia. But in a sense, it is this that gives him his power. He is able to descend into the underworld, to speak with and even do battle with the spirits of the animals, and then he returns to this world, reassuring the tribe that there will be good hunting. It has even been suggested that psychosis may well stay in populations precisely because of the way in which it creates shamans who then inspire the group, via a kind of religious fervour, towards victory over its enemies.[28]

The shaman is psychotic: he hears the voices of the spirits, he enters a trance where he confronts trauma and violence, and his own inner-voice is experienced as spirits that are outside him. He has the power to heal people; to make their pains disappear. He inspires the young men of the tribe to fight and kill its rivals and, in that sense, as noted above, passes on his genes indirectly. The shaman is the charismatic of the tribal world.[29] He is the "wounded healer" who, having suffered himself, is somehow able to alleviate suffering in others; and, in particular, to inspire others.[30] However, fieldwork with shamans reveals another side to them; a side upon which so many people who knew Jonathan Bowden have commented and Laura Kuennsberg would experience were she to be intellectually consistent.

American anthropologist Frank Salamone, writing of his experiences of a Nigerian shaman called "the Bori" summarises the shaman as follows:

> When I met the Bori Jugun Hella in 1970, he was already famous throughout Nigeria for his ability to communicate with spirits, heal the insane, predict the future, and intercede with political and spiritual forces that threatened his people. To me, however, Bori appeared as a likable clown who made us all laugh rather than a powerful figure about whom stories were told far and wide in Nigeria and its neighboring countries.[31]

Humour was how this shaman drew people to him, through his, "mild and meek manner, laced with buffoonery." The Bori was the archetypal charismatic; he could uplift people but also just make them laugh.

Bowden's similarity to the shaman archetype is sufficiently strong that he would act as a kind of priest for his listeners, even encouraging them to believe in some form of after life, as he did in "Credo:"

> One's life is a bullet that goes through screens. You hit your final screen, and you're dead. What happens after, none of us know. There's either a spiritual world, as all the cardinal and metaphysically objectivist religions of every type for every culture and every group say there is, or there's not. In my philosophy, the energy that's in us goes out into everything which exists. That there is an end after the end, but it's not finite or conscious. That's what I think.[32]

For Bowden, you can, in a sense, increase that energy through reaching for greatness:

> We're all going to die. Make use of that time which remains. Greatness is in the mind and in the fist. The glory of our tribe is not behind us. We can be great again. But the first thing that we have to do is to say, "I walk towards the tunnel, and I'm on my own, and I'm not afraid. And I have no regrets."[33]

Bowden, during a kind of trance, would commune with the based ghosts of the past, distil and thus control them, and then render them present and inspirational for his audience.

The Psychology of Jonathan Bowden

How was someone as talented, unusual and as troubled as Jonathan Bowden formed? Obviously, a large part of it is genetic. His mother seemingly had paranoid schizophrenia, or paranoid delusions, and, from Bowden's descriptions of her changing selves and implicitly abusive behaviour, probably suffered from Borderline Personality Disorder. As we saw earlier, a significant component of this is genetic and Bowden likely inherited this propensity, including the autism and extremely high anxiety which is related to it. The mother would have inherited this from her own mother both genetically and environmentally, insomuch as she was an illegitimate

child, when this was strongly socially unacceptable.

Having illegitimate children, in a context where this is unacceptable, is a marker of psychopathic personality. It betokens poor impulse control, weak social bonds and a failure to care about social perceptions.[34] As we have seen, sexual risk-taking is also associated with BPD, mediated by Neuroticism. In the 1930s, children who were illegitimate might find themselves shunned in the playground or refused service in shops. Many people saw them as being from "such a morally weak bloodline that they could corrupt others just by being in their presence."[35] The mother would have inherited, it would seem, aspects of the Dark Triad (Psychopathy, Narcissism and Machiavellianism) personality and passed them on to her son genetically. Clearly, Bowden was highly intelligent, something inherited from his father, a bank manager and journalist, and probably from his mother, in that we mate assortatively for intelligence, which is strongly genetic, in order to maximise the extent to which their genes are passed on.[36]

Being raised by such a mother would have precipitated Borderline Personality Disorder or trauma even further. Her parenting would be inconsistent, subject to unpredictable mood swings and to a certain degree it might involve emotional and physical abuse or neglect, as well as intense love. This would calibrate the child towards perceiving the world as an unstable and frightening place—a fast Life History Strategy, heightening its anxiety to an even greater extent. It would create insecure attachments and learn that love was conditional and that one had to manipulate the care-giver in order to receive it. To a certain degree, the child would be the parent of such a mother, absorbing the idea that he needed to look after her to avoid her descending into psychotic states. To make matters worse, Bowden's mother developed some kind of psychosis and then died when he was 15; an extremely formative age. Prone to trauma anyway, due to his evident autistic traits and high Neuroticism; this tragedy would have augmented all of those traits even further. Indeed, it would have brought out psychopathic traits, these being an adaptation to an unstable and dangerous world. This would have been rendered all the more pronounced in Bowden's mother by the presence of a step-father during childhood, as this tells the developing female that she is in an unstable ecology marked by promiscuity,[37] and especially a temperamental and unpleasant one like

Joseph Clay. This would increase Life History speed and, thus, psychopathy and related traits.[38]

Simply being "Alt-Right" has been found to be predicted by psychopathy,[39] as psychopaths thrive on danger and enjoy offending people and if you are Alt-Right in a Woke society then you are exposing yourself to danger and you are causing offence. As we have discussed, these are the precise traits which, when optimally balanced with high intelligence, produce creativity. Psychopathy is the most pronounced among artists and Bowden was an outsider artist and, we noted earlier, the early death of a parent is associated with a high degree of creative success. Seemingly, Bowden dealt with all this via developing a kind of Narcissistic Personality, in which he adopted a false and superior self in order to be able to cope. We have already explored how this could develop into charisma.

That Bowden failed ever to hold down a job or have a serious sexual relationship, would make sense in terms of certain reactions to low self-esteem, insecure attachments and fear of rejection, easily succumbing to depression, stress and boredom and maladaptive coping mechanisms. For example, you tell yourself you "just can't" do something (such as apply for a job or chat up a girl) because it would concede some kind of failure or it might lead to seemingly intolerable self-esteem damaging consequences. In this regard, it might be averred that the trauma of his mother's death would help, in part, to explain both Bowden's success (in terms of becoming a charismatic) but also his failure, in terms of work life or sexual relationships.[40]

Bowden was well aware of this talent in public speaking. He told a Santa Cruz audience on 25th February 2012 that: "I'm what's called a mediumistic speaker, so I hear the voice instant by instant before I speak, and when you stand up you hear what you're going to say a fraction of a second before it comes out of your mouth."[41] If Bowden is being honest here, then what he is describing is a very pronounced form of dissociation, consistent with PTSD or BPD. Such people can deal with stress by creating different selves or, at least, they can appear to become a very different person under stress, experiencing psychosis, and then forget about this when the stress has passed. These different selves can even have different memories; with the bad things, in a sense, happening to somebody else.[42] Sufferers may oscillate, to varying degrees, between these different selves, helping, for

example, to explain why they appear to lie. When they are feeling Narcissistic, something negative cannot have happened to them, and they are used to dissociating as a coping mechanism. It may be that some of Bowden's speeches involved entering a trance-like state—a form of dissociation—in which he heard his "other self" speak to him. Certainly, mediums, who report the voices of the dead speaking to them, score relatively high on measures of dissociation.[43]

Often autistics, in trying to negotiate a world which they don't instinctively understand, will notice a successful person and imitate them, even down to imitating their accent. They emulate others, but only when they perceive there to be a specific reason to do so, rather than naturally.[44] This is why, like Bowden, they may speak in an idiosyncratic fashion; not understanding or even caring that they sound strange. We saw earlier that Bowden was very interested in Sherlock Holmes and Michael Woodbridge informed me that Bowden identified with Holmes' brother Mycroft; that is to say, extremely intelligent but also impractical. In addition, and this is a marker of Borderline Personality, Bowden seemingly hero-worshipped Bill Hopkins—idealised him—and even altered his worldview and persona to be more like that of Hopkins, according to Eric Galati.

We noted earlier how this kind of Narcissism, when combined with high verbal intelligence, can develop into being a charismatic speaker. Psychopathic traits, as the accepted Psychopathy Checklist for psychiatrists lays out, can manifest as becoming easily bored due to a need for stimulation and a lack of impulse control (and so twice dropping out of a degree), a parasitic lifestyle (living off an allowance or benefits because one is too important to work), lack of realistic long-term goals (again, not working), and pathological lying (to obtain what you feel you deserve, including respect). Neuroscientists have also observed abnormal functioning in regions of the brain associated with impulse control, such as the prefrontal cortex, among habitual liars. These brain differences can make it more difficult for such people to resist lying, especially in a compulsive manner.[45] To some degree, these traits can be found in Bowden. As we also saw, very high intelligence can lead to a high degree of impracticality: bad at earning money, unable to drive and unable to hold down a job.

Fantasy and Paranoid Schizophrenia

We can make sense of Bowden's fantasist nature now that we understand this background. On the one hand, he seemed to have Narcissistic traits, regarding himself as superior to others and enjoying adoration. This makes sense as a response to a very difficult childhood, which creative people tend to have: an emotionally unpredictable mother who died when he was a teenager and was seriously mentally ill. Narcissists, in order to maintain the false self, will tell themselves lies which they will almost believe and they will tell others these lies in order to seem of high status and so elicit further Narcissistic supply.[46] They stick to and elaborate these so-called "pathological lies" across time and they will refuse to admit their lies even when confronted with clear evidence that they are lying. The same is true with those who have psychopathic traits, as they must also maintain an inflated sense of their own importance.[47]

Bowden's story of a family and children is an example of such a lie. On the other hand, if a person has a mentally ill parent, then they may have to lie in order to get the desired attention. Consequently, they learn to be manipulative; it becomes second-nature to lie and they may find themselves doing so compulsively, unable to stop themselves, lying quite unnecessarily. Most people tell about two lies per day; these people tell far more lies and do so, often, pointlessly.[48] Towards the end of his life, Bowden effectively had to admit to his friend Michael Woodbridge that he was an habitual liar, but it is likely that his friends and acquaintances had already inferred that.

Bowden was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. Schizotypal personality is a condition marked by disorganised and distorted thinking, unusual psychological experiences, an inability to experience pleasure, and difficulty with relationships, being highly withdrawn and not enjoying company. Schizophrenia is an extreme manifestation of these symptoms, tending also to involve paranoid delusions. Whereas autistics are not interested in external manifestations of internal states, people on the schizotypy spectrum, such as schizotypals, over-detect these, perceive them in the world itself and, so, can become paranoid.[49] Bowden does not sound like a person with schizotypal personality although Borderline Personality can involve, during breakdowns, periods of being, essentially, schizoid; mildly schizotypal. Consistent with this, around 13 per cent of boys and 19 per cent of girls diagnosed with borderline psychosis were later diagnosed with schizophrenia.[50]

Schizophrenia is not associated with creative achievement, because schizophrenics cannot think straight or achieve their goals. However, first degree relatives of schizophrenics are over-represented in terms of creative achievement.[51] This is, presumably, in part, because autism, bipolar disorder (oscillating between depression and mania) and schizophrenia involve some of the same alleles, though also distinct ones.[52] Moreover, the diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia is, in essence, a diagnosis of psychosis and this could manifest via Borderline Personality Disorder (related to Narcissism, as we have seen) or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which is very similar to BPD. This is more likely to be what happened to Bowden and also to his mother, though, clearly, schizophrenia is associated with delusions, disorganised thinking and, thus, not telling the objective truth. So, now we can see even more clearly that the brilliance of Bowden is inextricably linked to his flaws: being a fantasist, being Narcissistic, being a depressive and being a paranoid schizophrenic. To put it simply: it is rather difficult to have one without the other.

"It didn't seem to matter . . ."

The intensity of Bowden's charisma was seemingly such that for those who knew him, and for those that have been inspired by his speeches, Bowden's various flaws simply don't matter. As one journalist has put it, "He was a rather sad figure, and a rather comic one, but his voice resonates because it is both urgent and determined."[53] This is so often the sign of a charismatic.

Mark Collett, in trying to understand Bowden's growing posthumous fame, mused that, "He was a tortured character. He lived a strange life where fact and fiction became blurred. But he was compelling to be around. If you were at a dinner party with him, he'd just hold court, but then he'd return to a lonely caravan. He was a troubled guy, but he found a place where he flourished; where eccentrics were embraced rather than scorned . . . He painted himself as an eccentric, aristocratic genius. In death, he's become the person he always wanted to be . . . He's gone down in nationalist folklore . . . He's a nationalist folk hero."

Derek Turner explained to me that, "I met him quite often, and even spent a whole day with him once, walking around Reading, where he lived at the time. But 'know' is a strong word to use about him. I'm not sure anyone knew him well. He was . . . a very opaque person, and kept secrets from everyone, even from people like Stuart Millson with whom he worked

closely for several years, even down to where exactly he lived. But it didn't seem to matter, in a way, once he spoke."

"I liked the fellow. I was sad when he went," commented Tony Lecomber. "I thought he was an asset to the party. Okay, he lied about being married with five kids or about how well he was doing, but I don't care about that. You meet people like that in life; it was just one of his quirks."

For Damian Thompson, it seems, Bowden's flaws were clear, as was his "extremism," but these were all overwhelmed by Bowden's intellectual brilliance, such that it was worth praising him in a mainstream newspaper. "He was so fascinating to listen to," Thompson impassioned, his voice tinged with poignancy. "He was an unforgettable person."

Bowden's friend Michael Woodbridge, in his speech "Jonathan Bowden: A Memorial"[54] felt similarly. Everybody recollected the "subterfuge;" dropping him off at a landmark and Bowden walking in the wrong direction to "throw us off the scent." The "enigma" was "beginning to unravel since his death." But this didn't seem to matter to Woodbridge; that Bowden "created his own reality." This was because, despite the subterfuge:

> Jonathan's eyes would always remain firmly fixed on the conundrums within his mind. Side by side with Jonathan's intellectual understanding was the joyful wisdom brought to him through his intellectual courage; courage to face objective truth and so conquer new realms of knowledge. Jonathan epitomised the Aryan tradition because like Prometheus he dared steal fire from heaven.

Woodbridge added that Bowden "would write his own fictitious story. Jonathan decided from an early age to write his own life story," and he explained that Bowden's medication for paranoid schizophrenia meant he could no longer do that; he could no longer be the protagonist in his own novel. The outside world finally entered him, causing him to lose his confidence. His false self was shattered. "Know what you are!"[55] Bowden once demanded. Now, it seems, he'd finally been forced to accept all aspects of what he was.

Perhaps the kind of charismatic exuberance of Bowden's speeches—the way he could carry people into a different world, like a shaman—can only exude from people who delude themselves that they are protagonists in their own novel and, to successfully persuade themselves of this, they must lie to others. Maybe Bowden's hero Nietzsche imagined that he *was* Zarathustra. The key point, from an evolutionary perspective, was Bowden's ability to entrance members of his own ethnic family and to compel them to want to

keep that family going—in the face of members of it that would destroy it for their own selfish ends—and make that family great; make it fight, forever, to be one of the gods.

What happens to someone and from where do they originate such that they develop these entrancing talents? A desire to discover this, surely, is why people asked me to write this book. People want to make sense of a man with such intellectual and charismatic gifts that a female philosopher should wish to carry his speeches around in her handbag. Why should she do this? Surely, in case, as the clown-world day drags on, she should need inspiring to remember to triumph over the worms, to keep up the fight, and to proclaim proudly, "We're *not* sorry!"

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Sharon Maxwell. Archivist, Reading University. 24th September 2024. By email.

Stuart Millson. Western Goals Institute and Revolutionary Conservative Caucus. 3rd October 2024. By video-phone.

John Morgan. Editor-in-Chief, Arktos Publishing, 2010–2016. 12th September 2024. By email.

Kevin Mulholland. New Right Forum Attendee. 28th September 2024. By email.

Kai Murros. Speaker at the New Right Forum. 20th September 2024. By email.

Mike Newland. British National Party Press Officer. 20th September 2024. By telephone.

Dr James Peters. Archivist, Manchester University. 14th October 2024. By email.

Rt. Hon. Michael Portillo. Employer of Bowden's friend. 7th December 2024. By email.

Steve Prosser. Bowden's Step-Sister's Husband. 6th February 2025. Market Harborough, via an intermediary.

Lady Michèle Renouf. New Right Forum Speaker. 23rd September 2024. By telephone.

Peter Rushton. British National Party Activist. 30th September 2024. By video-phone.

Michael Smith. School friend of Jonathan Bowden's. 1st October 2024. By video-phone.

Stead Steadman. Member of the Spinning Top Club. 7th October 2024. By telephone.

Martin Summers. Friend of Jonathan Bowden's. 20th December 2024. By telephone.

Dr Tomislav Sunic. Friend of Jonathan Bowden's. 25th October 2024. By

video-phone.

Matt Tait. Head of the New Right Students Association. 14th September 2024. By telephone.

Jared Taylor. American Renaissance. 20th September 2024. By video-phone.

Steven Taylor. Founder of the Spinning Top Club. 20th November 2024. By telephone.

Damian Thompson. School friend of Jonathan Bowden's. 27th September 2024. By video-phone.

Nadine Thompson-Best. Alumni Engagement Coordinator; Birkbeck, University of London. 14th November 2024. By email.

Tony Trowbridge. Friend of Jonathan Bowden's. 10th October 2024. By telephone.

Derek Turner. Editor of *Right Now!* 23rd September 2024. By email.

Adrian Wadley. Paternal Cousin of Jonathan Bowden. 14th September 2024. By email.

Michael Walker. Editor of *The Scorpion.* 7th October 2024. By email.

Martin Wilson. President of Wokingham Cricket Club. 12th September 2024. By email.

Michael Woodbridge. Chairman of the Spinning Top Club and Treasurer of the New Right Committee. 16th September 2024. By telephone.

Gallery of Images

NEW RIGHT
THE MAGAZINE OF A NEW POLITICAL DISCUSSION GROUP
EDITED BY JONATHAN BOWDEN.
NO
THE LABOUR PARTY
MORE ROPE !! MORE ROPE !!
SPA Bowden apologies to Ralph Steadman

New Right: A Magazine of a New Political Discussion Group, 1980.

Anthony Bowden. Undated.

WEDDING BELLS rang for the manager of Wokingham's National Westminster Bank, Mr Anthony Bowden, when he was married to Mrs Sylvia Maskell at St James' Church, Finchampstead.

Mr Bowden, of Milton Gardens, Wokingham is a well-known local figure, being a past chairman of Wokingham Businessmens' Association, a vice-president and committee member of Wokingham Cricket Club, and a member of Wokingham Chamber of Trade and Commerce.

Mrs Maskell, of Waterloo Road, Crowthorne, was given in marriage by Mr Peter Greaves and was attended by her daughter, Miss Gail Maskell. The best man was Mr John Hall. The ceremony was conducted by the Rev Dennis Crossley.

A reception was held at the Tithe Barn Hotel, Wokingham, and the couple left for a honeymoon in Jersey. Their home will be in Crowthorne.

Picture: Jennifer Ford, Crowthorne

Anthony Bowden, Sylvia Maskell.
Bracknell and Ascot Times, August 11, 1983.

Jonathan Bowden. 1991.

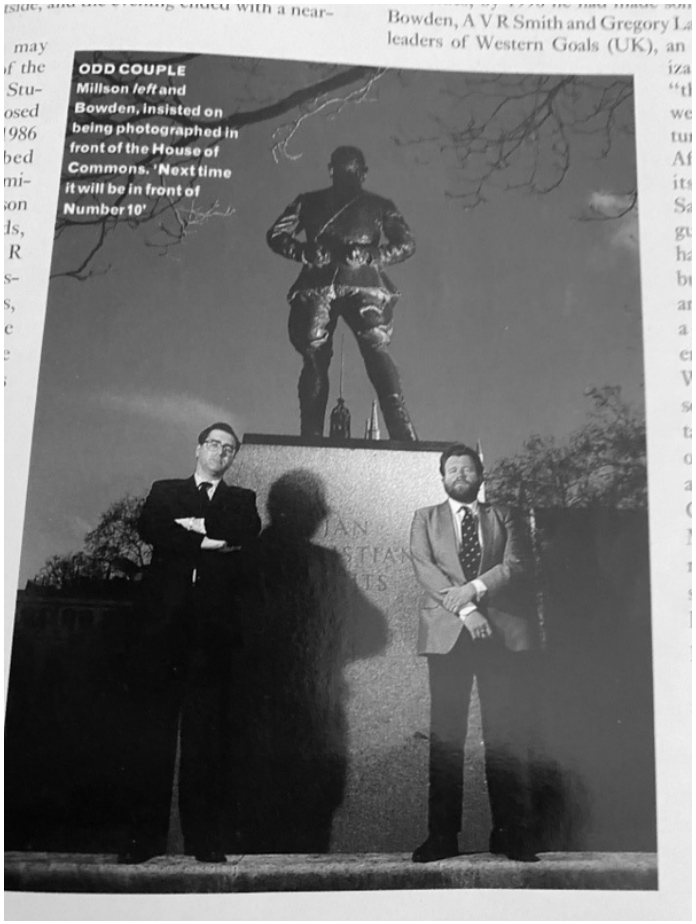
Jonathan Bowden, Lord Sudeley, Dr Mark Mayall. 1991.

Jonathan Bowden, Andrew Smith (director of the Western Goals Institute), Stuart Millson. 1991.

Darling of the British new right Jean-Marie Le Pen hosted by Andrew Smith (centre) and Jonathan Bowden (right) of the Revolutionary Conservative Caucus

Pedigree
Chums
Stuart Millson and Jonathan Bowden dream of
England, a pure, Anglo-Saxon England, where blacks
and homosexuals know their place, abortion is
banned and hanging rules. It's a dream shared by
a rising group of young Tory extremists.
Francis Wheen meets Maggie's Militant Tendency.
Photographs by Dan Burn Forti

Stuart Millson, Jonathan Bowden.
Esquire Magazine, July 1994.


Bowden, A V R Smith and Gregory La
leaders of Western Goals (UK), an
ODD COUPLE
Millson *left* and
Bowden, insisted on
being photographed in
front of the House of
Commons. 'Next time
it will be in front of
Number 10'

Stuart Millson, Jonathan Bowden.
Esquire Magazine, July 1994.

Scott McClean, Mrs Griffin, Nick Griffin, Jean-Marie Le Pen, interpreter, Jonathan Bowden. 2004.

LONDON ELECTION RALLY

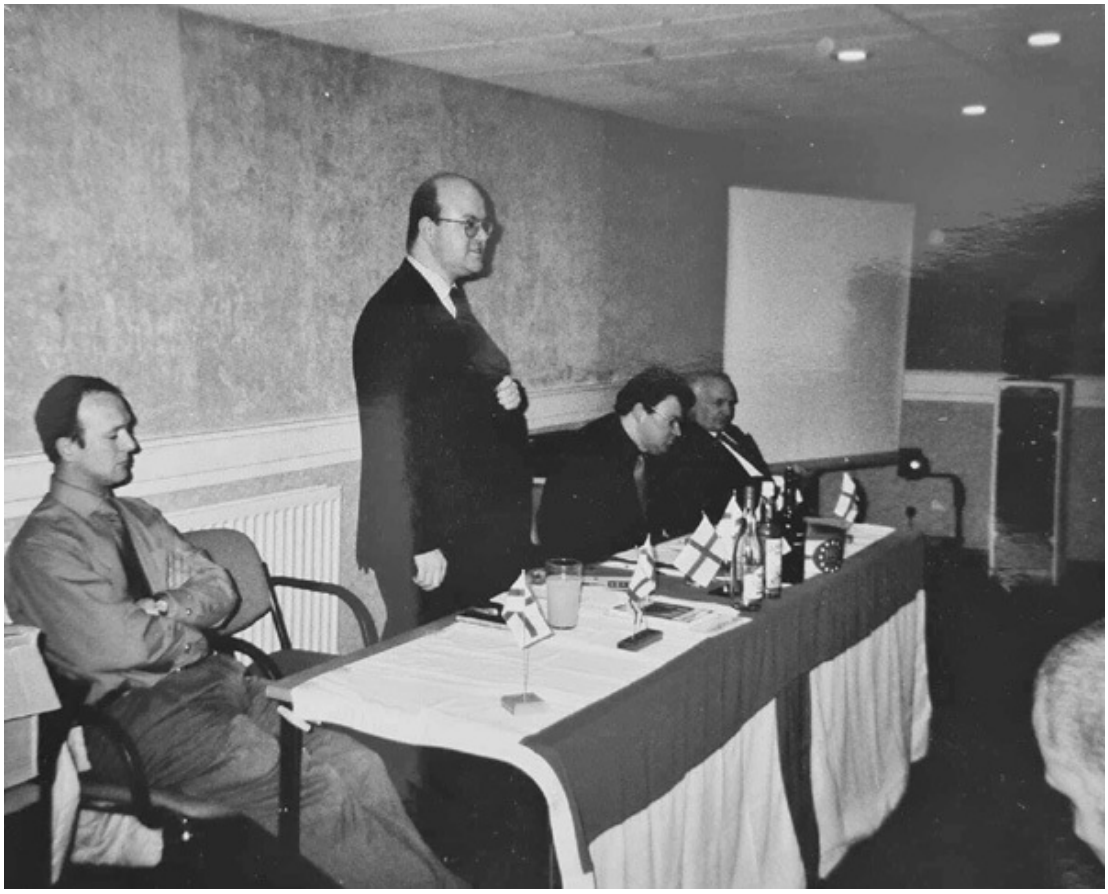
SUNDAY, 10th April saw the second London BNP rally of the year take place. The primary reason for the meeting being called was to motivate activists into preparing, promoting and campaigning for the general election on May 5th and also to raise the much needed funds to finance the whole endeavour.

The meeting was excellently chaired by Havering BNP branch organiser Alan Bailey. The first to speak was the party's group development officer Tony Lecomber, who gave an broad outline of the election and the party's strategy. Next was BNP cultural officer Jonathan Bowden who gave an energetic address describing the terrible state of affairs in relation to electoral fraud in last year's local elections and its ramifications for this year's general election.

London regional organiser Richard Barnbrook followed with an appeal for all to get involved with the campaign in the party's target parliamentary constituency of Barking (where he is the candidate) in the final weeks of the run up to May 5th. After a short break, BNP chairman Nick Griffin took to the top table. Mr. Griffin described the way the media, banks and authorities had been working against the party to undermine its support but said that this was having no effect, as it had overcome all hurdles in its way. He continued, speaking about the problems of multi-culturalism and its effects on Keighley, Yorkshire, the seat he will be contesting, and the ways in which the powers-that-be sweep all this under the carpet, pretending there is no race problem. He finished by saying that the party will, hopefully, do very well in several constituencies up and down the country and could, possibly, achieve some good second and third places. A collection of over £1,700 was made, and the meeting ended with a rendition of the hymn *Jerusalem*. Just over 60 members were present.

REPORT BY BOB GERTNER

Nick Griffin speaks. Seated are (from left): Jonathan Bowden, Alan Bailey (meeting chairman) and Richard Barnbrook.



Eddy Butler, Adrian Davies (chairman of the *Freedom Party*), Jonathan Bowden, Mike Newland. Undated.

PICTURE EXCLUSIVE: SECRET GUESTS WHO DEFIED RIOTERS FOR A

A date with Le Pen

TABLE-TALK: Guests of the extreme Western Goals Inst

THIS is the private dinner party which sparked a riot on the streets of London.

Names of the 75 guests — heckled, booed and screamed at as they arrived — were kept secret by the extreme Right-wing pressure group which hosted the function.

But today The Mail on Sunday can reveal who attended the controversial dinner and who proudly lined up alongside one of Europe's most inflammatory political figures. The man they had come to see, French National

By KIM WILLSHER

Front leader Jean Marie Le Pen, was the real target of the angry demonstrators battling with 300 police outside.

Armed security men sealed off the banqueting suite at the Charing Cross Hotel as 1,000 banner-waving protesters disrupted his final engagement of a four-day visit to Britain.

Guests of the extreme Western Goals Institute heard him voice his opposition to a Maastricht treaty, support Mrs Thatcher's call for a referendum on plans for a federal Europe and expound his views on immigration. 'As Mrs Thatcher has argued forcefully and with foresight on Europe, the people should be allowed to say what they feel and what they want,' he said.

'Because it is a cruel reality that our nationalist movements do not stand a chance against the establishment except by uniting all levels of society.'

Policies

There was applause and glasses were raised as the Union Jack was waved by one of the organisers, Jonathan Bowden, a WGI director. Western Goals claimed a number of British MPs wished to attend but refused to name them. T were believed away after Kenneth Bak Pen's policie and poisonou

As he yesterday, M visit a demonstrato face which of the Le room for a 'We would grow in natural th

Andrew Goals pre a radical Britain, s

Unknown, Nick Griffin, Eddy Butler, Jonathan Bowden. August 12, 2006.

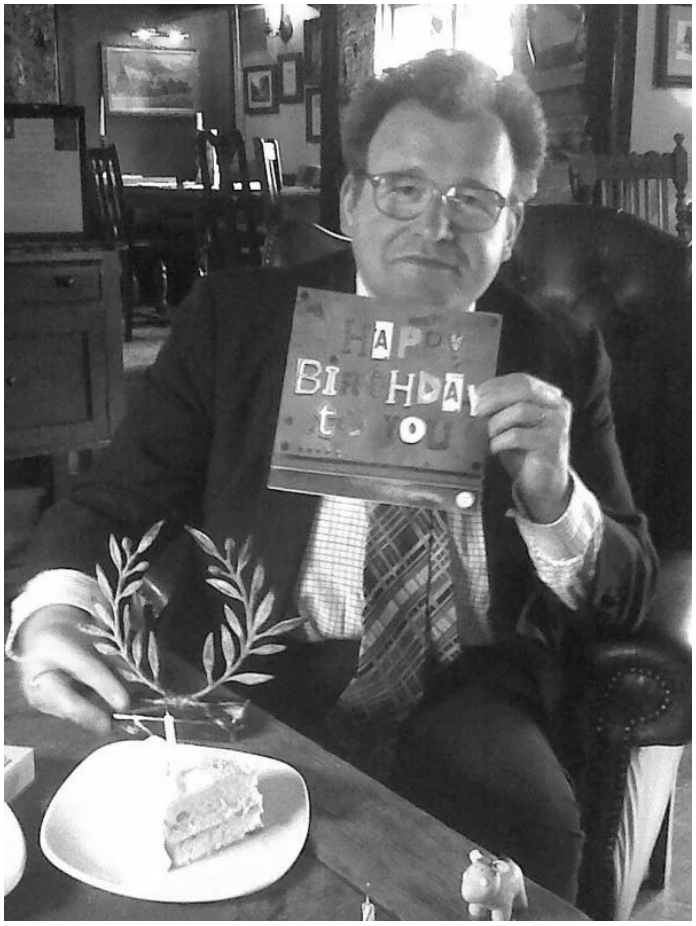
Jonathan Bowden. August 12, 2006.

Eddy Butler, Jonathan Bowden. Undated.

Eddy Butler, Jonathan Bowden. Undated.

Nick Griffin, Jonathan Bowden, Tony Lecomber, Martin Wingfield (editor of *Voice of Freedom*). Undated.

Nick Griffin, Jonathan Bowden, Tony Lecomber, Martin Wingfield (editor of *Voice of Freedom*). Undated.



Jonathan Bowden. Undated.

From Dr M.J.Franklin
Tutor

Wolfson College
CAMBRIDGE CB3 9BB
Fax 0223–335937
Telephone 0223–335920

2nd August, 1991

Mr Gregory Lauder-Frost
Meetings Secretary
The Monday Club
BCM "Conservative"
LONDON
WC1N 3XX

Dear Mr Lauder-Frost,

Jonathan D.A. Bowden

I am replying to your letter of 31st July 1991.

Mr Bowden matriculated as a junior member of this College and as a member of the University of Cambridge in October 1988. I was his Tutor. He went out of residence permanently on 1st February 1989. Under the College regulations, former Junior Members remain members of the College for life provided they have been members of the College for at least one academical year, a condition which Mr Bowden did not satisfy. In the short time he was a member of the College, Mr Bowden took no University examinations.

I do not feel there is anything more I can tell you without Mr Bowden's consent.

Yours sincerely,

PRESIDENT
RT. HON THE LORD SUDELEY

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DR. MARK MAYALL

VICE CHAIRMAN
ANDREW HUNTER MP

TREASURER
CEDRIC GUNNERY

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
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PAUL WILLIAMS

CONSERVATIVE & UNIONIST

BCM "CONSERVATIVE"
LONDON WC1N 3XX

TEL: 081 531 4616
FAX: 081 531 2688

31st July,1991.

Dr.M.J.Franklin,
Wolfson College,
CAMBRIDGE. CB3 9BB.

Dear Dr.Franklin,

JONATHAN D.A. BOWDEN

Thank you for your letter of the 26th instant.

Mr.Bowden joined the Club late last year and applied in March to join the Executive Council. He has quoted certain academic qualifications from Cambridge University.

The Club usually vets members about whom we know little or nothing, and particularly so of they wish to join the Council. This is a normal proceedure which could save us any possible embarrasment in the future.

Any information about Mr.Bowden that you can give us, academic or personal, will be treated in the stricteat confidence.

With every good wish,

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Lauder

GREGORY LAUDER-FROST.
MEETINGS SECRETARY.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL 1990-1991
DR. MARK MAYALL; ANDREW HUNTER, MP; HON. W. DENIS WALKER; GREGORY LAUDER-FROST; CEDRIC GUNNERY; ROD MORRIS; MICHAEL CLACK;

CONFIDENTIAL

Reference: Jonathan David Anthony BOWDEN.
Born 1962. Executive Council member.

EDUCATION: Presentation College, Reading, Berkshire.

Left in 1980. Gained the following 'O' levels:

Chemistry	A
Physics	B
English	B
English L.	A
Latin	C
History	A
Religion	A
Geography	C
Maths	D

No record of further education at this school (i.e.,'A' levels).

Registered for September 1988 at the Wolfson College, Cambridge. Further details awaited.

London University central registry state that he is not presently studying there. He did, however, complete one year, 1983/4,in a B.A.History course at Birkbeck College

THE MONDAY CLUB

CONSERVATIVE & UNIONIST

Postal address:
BCM "CONSERVATIVE"
LONDON WC1N 3XX

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FAX: 081-531 2688

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Hon.W.Denis Walker
(Membership Secretary)
Christopher Forster
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Stuart Millson
(Publications Editor)
Jo[illegible]rick Morris
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Jonathan Bowden
(Chairman, Media Committee)
Cllr. Sam Swerling
Michael McKenzie
Edward Attewell
Brian Daines
John P.B.Stacey
Kenneth Dixon
Michael A.K.Smith
Harvey Ward

Unless indicated otherwise all correspondence to the above address

58 Coleshill Flats,
Pimlico Road,
London. SW1W 8LL.

20th August,1991.

Cllr.Sam Swerling,
15 Clapgate Road,
Bushey. Herts.

Dear Sam,

Jonathan Bowden

When the above announced that he was about to stand for election to the Executive Council, Mark Mayall and I asked Cedric Gunnery what he knew about him, as his membership had been processed by Cedric. It appears that all Cedric knew was what Jonathan had told him. He was not vetted in any way. (Unusual for Cedric).

Further investigations showed that he just appeared in October last year, unknown, and joined the Monday Club and Western Goals at the same time.

Following discussions between myself, Mark Mayall & Denis Walker, we instituted, quietly, investgations when Jonathan applied to join the Executive. We felt we needed to know something about him.

I am afraid that I rather let matters slip. However, following his uncouth behaviour at our Seminar I sent chasers for the information earlier requested.

I now enclose, firstly, a copy of his joining form and the C.V., that he submitted for photocopying to the membership in March. You will note the educational qualifications he purports to have and also that he says that he teaches English, although he has two apalling errors on his C.V. and the grammar is dreadful.

Secondly, our vetting has shown that he has no 'A'levels, and that also he holds no qualifications from Cambridge or London Universities. Moreover, the tone of the letter from Cambridge gives theimpression that he left under a cloud after only 4 months.

As you have taken an interest in Jonathan I thought I should invite your comments as he has clearly deliberately misled the Executive and would also have done so to the membership had there been elections

I look forward to your comments.

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

GREGORY LAUDER-FROST,
MEETINGS SECRETARY.

c.c. Dr.Mark Mayall.

ANNUAL ELECTIONS 1991

ORDINARY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL SEATS

VOTE FOR JONATHAN BOWDEN

Curriculum vitae : I was born in Kent in 1962 of English and Ulster-Scottish parents and I was educated at Presentation College, Reading, and Cambridge University. At present I am studying for a Phd at London University and I have two businesses, one which deals with teaching--- 'A'Level, GCSE, Oxbridge entrance, Cambridge Proficiency in English and so on...and another which deals with printing.

Political Statement: I believe that the Monday Club has to be the most important group in the Conservative Party---it has to be less of a 'club' and more of an activist organization which fights for rightwing ideas and principles. In my view the Club should evolve to the point at which it becomes a "party within the party"---at least a radical 'pressure group' or ginger group within the party. Moreover the Club should be more outward looking, have firmer principles and intellectual ideas and be more rightwing than it presently is . Its intellectual or ideological commitment should also be stronger than at present and to my mind the present statement of principles is far too weak ---it needs to be stronger and more decisive. Overall I believe that the Club has declined over the last decade and needs to be revived. Moreover the Club has had a tendency to be too mild-mannered, too ' middle-class' and not forceful enough in its presentation of policy (take the issue of democratization within the party as one example .) Ultimately I believe that the Club should take a stronger line on issues such as cultural and sexual politics , ideology , Nationalism , closer links with the Right in Europe and America and firm opposition to liberal-Marxist degeneracy.

Here are four things I stand for :

* Mandatory death sentences for IRA activists by military tribunals
* Abolition of the Commissions for Racial and Sexual Equality
* An end to all multi-racial and multi cultural iniatives
* Recriminalization of male homosexuality

If you agree with this, then vote for : JONATHAN BOWDEN

MONDAY CLUB ELECTIONS

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VOTE FOR JONATHAN BOWDEN AS AN ORDINARY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER

****

About the Author

Edward Dutton is a researcher based in Oulu in northern Finland. Born in London in 1980, he read Theology at Durham University and did a PhD in Religious Studies at Aberdeen University, during which he was a guest researcher at Leiden University in the Netherlands. He is titular Professor of the Evolutionary Psychology of Business at Asbiro University in Poland, Honorary Professor in the Institute of Psychology at the Russian Academy of Sciences and Research Associate in Scientific Research at Tabuk University in Saudi Arabia. Dutton is best known for his channel *The Jolly Heretic*. He is the author of over 20 books including, most recently, *The Naked Classroom: The Evolutionary Psychology of Your Time at School* (Jolly Heretic Publications, 2023), *Breeding the Human Herd: Eugenics, Dysgenics and the Future of the Species* (Imperium Press, 2023) and (with J.O.A. Rayner-Hilles) *Woke Eugenics: How Social Justice is a Mask for Social Darwinism* (Imperium Press, 2024). Dutton has penned three previous biographies: *The Ruler of Cheshire: Sir Piers Dutton, Tudor Gangland and the Violent Politics of the Palatine* (Leonié Press, 2015); *J. Philippe Rushton: A Life History Perspective* (Thomas Edward Press, 2018) and *Churchill's Headmaster: The 'Sadist' Who Nearly Saved the British Empire* (Manticore Press, 2019).

Other Books by Imperium Press

Jonathan Bowden	Why I Am Not a Liberal (Studies in Reaction series)
Edward Dutton	Woke Eugenics: How Social Justice is a Mask for Social Darwinism
Mike Maxwell	The Cultured Thug Handbook: A Guide to Radical Right-Wing Thought
Neema Parvini	The Populist Delusion
Thomas Carlyle	On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History
W. E. Hearn	The Indo-European Household
Homer	The Odyssey (Western Canon series)
Frederic Harrison	Oliver Cromwell (Great Men series)
Nick Land	The Dark Enlightenment (Studies in Reaction series)
Robert Filmer	Patriarcha: The Complete Political Works
Numa Fustel Denis de Coulanges	The Ancient City (Traditionalist Histories series)

www.imperiumpress.org